University of Alberta

Characteristics, Experiences, and Behaviour of University Student Leaders

by

Michel Ouellette

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in

Educational Administration

Department of Educational Policy Studies

Edmonton, Alberta

Spring 1998

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **Characteristics, Experiences, and Behaviour of University Student Leaders** submitted by Michel Ouellette in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Administration.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the hundreds of students who give of their time and effort in leadership positions so others may benefit. Although rewards are few, may the memories and friendships you make last a lifetime.

ABSTRACT

This study focussed on students in formal leadership positions. Twenty-one student leaders involved with five university student groups at the University of Alberta were observed in organizational meetings and participated in personal as well as group interviews. Information was content analysed for emerging themes.

Participants responded to experiences helping to mould leadership behaviour. Students identified influential experiences including volunteer, community and school activities, leadership roles, participation in sports, and work experiences. Role models and mentors highlighted for contributions to leadership deportment included parents, coaches, teachers, university professors, administrators, as well as present and former employers.

Leadership conduct was also assessed as a result of observing roles, assuming group responsibilities, and placement in specific roles during meetings. Pressures, demands, and expectations also influenced how student leaders behaved within and outside their respective organizations. Hard work, effective communication skills, need for commitment, and time required for leadership were among successful ingredients. Knowing all facets of the organization as well as modelling appropriate and expected behaviour were keys to gaining respect and remaining effective. Behaviour in non-leadership settings was also considered important to maintain credibility. Despite time commitments affecting academics and relationships, students acknowledged a sense of fulfilment from the experience as well as lasting friendships.

Student leaders involved with specific student groups perceived their influence as minimal while representatives of larger student organizations were considered a greater

influence because of peer credibility and involvement on university-wide committees with various members of the university's senior administration. Student leaders also supported the learning potential of leadership activities and encouraged university officials to market such opportunities.

Future research on student leadership should focus on differences between male and female student leaders, between older and younger leaders, differences in student leadership among various student groups, and benefits of student leadership to career aspirations. Communities and schools should also look at programs for young people that enhance development in preparation for future leadership opportunities.

Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of several key individuals and groups in the successful completion of this life-long dream.

Mike Andrews, my supervisor provided much in terms of support, advice, editorials, timely responses, and overall encouragement towards the completion of this document. More than a supervisor, Mike became a friend.

Ken Ward, Jose da Costa, Don Richards, Maryanne Doherty-Poirier, and Stan Wilson as members of my committee for their insights, comments, and support.

Garry Johnson for agreeing to be the External Reader of this dissertation.

I also want to acknowledge the faculty and students in the Department of Educational Policy Studies for the courses taught and the learning provided during the past three years.

Wyn Gittins, a former colleague at work, supervisor, mentor, and friend gave me the drive to begin this undertaking and encouragement to see it to its completion. He remains the single greatest influence to my professional career. I am fortunate to have known a man of such character and compassion.

Finally, my parents Pat and Lorette for being my mentors in life and my siblings Gilles, Jacques, Jean-Maurice, Micheline, Pierrette, Jean-Marc, and their spouses for their constant support and encouragement as I was pursuing my goal. What I am and what I will become is a testament to the people who guided me during my youth and continue to influence me as an adult.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Little is known regarding student leadership and its influence on the educational community. Some studies have examined student culture (e.g., Durst & Schaeffer, 1989; Leemon, 1972; Schaeffer & Durst, 1989); however, information beyond rituals and symbolism surrounding the student population remains scarce.

Research on leadership and its many influences have followed several paths. Initially, individual personality traits (e.g., Katz & Kahn, 1978; Sotirin, 1987; Stogdill, 1974) were a focus of attention. Situational variables were reviewed and examined their affect on leadership behaviour (e.g., Fiedler, 1967; Hersey & Blanchard, 1977). Further research concentrated on leadership and its interrelationship to internal and external factors (e.g., Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Bolman & Deal, 1991; Hunt & Osborne, 1982; Morrison, 1992; Sashkin & Burke, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1989). Other studies (e.g., Selznick, 1957, 1969; Sergiovanni, 1984, 1989) have focussed on cultural leadership in general and its influence on organizational behaviour. Recent studies (e.g., Cunningham & Gresso, 1993; Gawreluck, 1993; Waldman, 1990) explored the effect of organizational culture on the behaviour of leaders.

Attempting to understand culture as a factor on leadership, Werner and Schoepfle (1987) concentrated on "a system of knowledge [including knowledge about knowledge] that explains the social and physical universe and provides action plans and criteria [attributes] for the engagement of further plans for coping" (p. 97). Other theories have attempted to explain how individuals in positions of leadership utilize several factors to maximize performance. An interplay of variables assists in obtaining peek performance from an organization and its members; however, debate continues surrounding how best to achieve organizational goals. A leader may use personal qualities to influence leadership behaviour, may adjust a leadership style to meet demands of a situation, or may examine the culture of the organization as an influence on leadership.

Leaders generate organizational change. Nevertheless, questions remain surrounding the influence of a leader's experiences and characteristics in relation to leadership behaviour. By their presence and interactions with various members, leaders

also change organizational dynamics, modify the culture of an organization, allow co-workers to change the organization, and use organizational culture to deal with emerging problems and issues.

Students involved in leadership positions also exact influences on their membership. Past experiences, particularly successful experiences, serve to influence behaviour and determine how student leaders react to situations and interact with peers. Students also bring skills that enable them to assume leadership roles, create a positive culture to enhance their own performance, and influence other members of the group.

This study examined the behaviour and experiences of student leaders in specific leadership positions. Research focussed on student leaders involved in governance activities at various levels: undergraduate student government, graduate student government, residence associations, and student fraternities. Data collection included 21 personal interviews with student leaders, 5 observations of student government meetings, and 5 group interviews. Anonymity of participants was safeguarded and all data collected remained confidential in accordance with the University of Alberta's guidelines for research.

General Research Question

What relationship is perceived to exist between the characteristics and experiences of university student leaders and their behaviour in formal, specific leadership positions?

Specific Research Questions

1. Which past personal experiences are most influential on the leadership behaviour of students in formal leadership positions?
2. What leadership behaviour is demonstrated by students in formal leadership positions?
3. What major benefits do students gain from involvement in formal leadership activities?
4. What significant learning takes place from involvement in formal student leadership activities?
5. What is the major influence of student leaders on the university community?

Significance of the Study

Research on leadership in educational organizations has focussed on principals at the primary and secondary levels, superintendents, as well as senior administrators and deans of faculties at the postsecondary level. Within the postsecondary community, few studies have concentrated on students in leadership positions. Research has examined the relationship of student leaders to school or university administrators (e.g., Jeffares, 1971; Zuo, 1995). Studies have also highlighted student culture (e.g., Gottlieb & Hodgkins, 1968; Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Newcomb, 1968; Wallace, 1966) at the postsecondary level.

In the past, students on university campuses confined involvement to periphery social activities, student representation, and advocacy. Participation in leadership activities presented opportunities for increased involvement in university affairs as well as developing skills which benefited career endeavours. Formal positions in government enabled students to become involved in institutional governance and refine leadership skills.

Few studies have examined characteristics and experiences of students as influences on leadership. While past experiences including leadership activities would effect the behaviour of student leaders, little information was provided regarding types of experiences and which might be more important. As well, campus influences had not been explored and their possible effect on leadership behaviour. Research on benefits and learning associated with leadership was also scarce as well as possible contributions to leadership behaviour.

This study provided information on key past experiences which contributed to leadership behaviour. Among those experiences were previous activities during initial years at university. Included in those experiences were the influence of significant individuals in the community as well as at university who spurred involvement in leadership activities and affected leadership behaviour. Benefits and learning associated with leadership involvement were also explored as well as their contribution to leadership behaviour.

The conceptual framework (Figure 2.1) outlined an existing linear relationship of

past experiences and campus influences to leadership behaviour. As well, benefits and learning derived from leadership involvement suggest a linear association with little evidence of any possible interrelationship among these factors. The study outlined key past experiences, influential campus experiences, benefits which arose from leadership involvement as well as significant learning associated with leadership activities. In addition, the study examined a possible interrelationship among contributing factors. These findings resulted in the development of the expanded conceptual framework (Figure 9.1) depicting these interrelationships.

Terminology

Formal leadership positions. For purposes of this study, formal leadership positions referred to recognized student positions at various levels of university sanctioned student government.

Student leaders. As elected or appointed representatives of the general student population or a defined segment of the student population.

Student organizations. Formal student groups recognized by the university community, representing various constituent groups, with members elected or selected from these constituent groups.

GSA. The Graduate Students' Association, the student organization representing all graduate students at the University of Alberta.

SU. The Students' Union, the student organization representing all undergraduate students at the University of Alberta.

HARC. The Housing and Residents' Committee, the student organization representing all students living in the University of Alberta residence system and a committee of the SU.

IFC. The Interfraternity Council, the student organization representing all men's fraternities at the University of Alberta.

PAN or Panhell. The Panhellenic Council, the student organization representing all women's fraternities at the University of Alberta.

Assumptions

After nine years of working with student leaders, I believe they have certain experiences which contributed to future involvement in leadership activities. These activities shaped behaviour, enabled students to enjoy relative success as student leaders, and provided factors which contributed to effectiveness. Experiences may be fashioned by students' home communities as well as regular interactions with people from these communities. Key people may include parents and siblings during formative years as well as other influential individuals such as teachers, coaches, and other community leaders. Later on, when students move away from home, new people and new surroundings become important. In the case of students, the university community becomes a key influence. Regular exposure to various situations, professors, and even administrators shape behaviour and determine possible future involvement in university activities including leadership endeavours.

Furthermore, I believe student leaders possess certain life experiences which influence leadership, effectiveness of leadership, and duties as student leaders. Such experiences have enabled the development of skills deemed positive and beneficial in present and future leadership endeavours. Students have also had the opportunity to observe other individuals in leadership situations and will copy behaviours seen as positive. Conversely, through experiences and observations, students will recognize and avoid negative behaviours and skills adversely affecting leadership. All deportment, both positive and negative, provide benefits and learning which guide student leaders and assist in leadership activities.

In addition, student leaders bring certain behaviour based on past experiences including previous leadership experiences and adopt certain conduct as a result of observation and experimentation. Such experiences and behaviour influence students as incumbent leaders, guide their actions and interactions, help to modify behaviour based on various situations, and will prove valuable once students have moved on to future careers and possibly leadership positions.

Limitations

Several limitations were undeniable based on the methodology chosen for the study. They were as follows:

1. Results of the study were limited by the nature of the research method selected for the study. Specifically, the use of personal and group interviews as well as observations of meetings made other data unavailable through alternative methodologies.

2. Personal and group interviews as well as observations of meetings were limited to the period of September to November, 1996. Thus, the number of months that student leaders had been involved with their respective student organizations varied between one and five months.

3. The lack of similar research limited comparisons to other studies.

4. The study was limited to the information that participants were willing to share from their experiences and perceptions as student leaders.

Delimitations

1. The study was delimited to 21 student leaders of five formal student leadership groups: Students' Union, Graduate Students' Association, Housing and Residents' Committee, Interfraternity Council, and Panhellenic Council.

2. The study was delimited to student leaders in executive positions of five formal student groups.

3. Findings were delimited to analysis of information from personal interviews, observation of meetings, and group interviews with student leaders from each of five student organizations.

4. Although both men and women student leaders took part in the study, the findings did not address leadership differences between men and women.

5. Although older and younger student leaders took part in the study, the findings did not address leadership differences between older and younger student leaders.

6. Although five student organizations took part in the study, the findings did not address leadership differences among different student organizations.

Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into nine chapters. Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the to the study, a statement of the problem, significance of the study, definition of relevant terms, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the study. Chapter 2 presents a review of literature related to student involvement, leadership, leadership effectiveness, student leadership, as well as specific research on student leadership and the influence of past experiences, leadership behaviour including meeting behaviour, significant learning associated with leadership experiences, benefits derived as a result of leadership involvement, and the influence of student leadership on campus. In addition, chapter 2 presents the conceptual framework guiding the study. Chapter 3 details the research method including an overview of the respondent group studied, research instruments, and time line followed. In addition, trustworthiness of the research method and ethical considerations are discussed. Chapter 4 describes the characteristics of the participants in the study and student organizations taking part in the study. Chapter 5, 6 and 7 focusses on the five specific research questions and presents findings based on personal and group interviews as well as observations of meetings. Chapter 8 provides a discussion of relevant findings in the study as they relate to the literature. Discussion focusses on each specific research question and its pertinent results. Finally, Chapter 9 concludes the thesis with an overview of the study, summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations. As well, an expanded conceptual framework lists relevant findings associated with past experiences, campus influence, outcomes, and learnings as they relate to leadership behaviour. Personal reflections conclude the thesis and provide insights into various aspects of the study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In reviewing the literature pertinent to the general research question and specific research questions, a brief overview of research on student involvement will be presented. An examination of relevant research in the areas of leadership, leadership effectiveness and student leadership will follow. Finally, student leadership literature is reviewed extensively with emphasis on past experiences, past influences, various roles, benefits associated with student leadership, significant learning which occurs, and its influence on college and university campuses.

Student Involvement in Co-curricular Activities

Student involvement is based in part on the school of thought in student development theory which postulates that the degree of learning is proportional to the amount of energy the student commits to the academic experience. Lipset and Altbach (1967) identified three events which spurred the increase of student involvement and student activitism. They included: the rise of interest of white students in Civil Rights movement, the Berkeley riots of 1964, and the Vietnam protest movements. Altbach and Kelly (1973) identified the emergence of the "New Left" (p. 38) as a significant development in the rise of student involvement. Tice (1976) suggested that student involvement is tied to student rights; rights defined as "a valid claim on others that entails the liberty either to act or not to act, to be treated or not to be treated in some particular way, given requisite ability and opportunity" (p. 19) and included legal and constitutional rights, participation rights related to the institution, and human or moral rights (pp. 18-23).

Institutional culture also influences the degree of student involvement. Morgan (1997) presented the cultural perspective and its positive link to student involvement. Kuh and Whitt (1988) suggested that although culture may be invisible, it is important that an understanding of the beliefs and values of the community be shared by its members. Kuh et al. (1991) recommended an understanding of the dominant culture as well as an appreciation for the many other organizational realities of students, faculty and

staff.

In addition, developing an appropriate campus climate affects the extent of student involvement. Astin (1993) outlined several measures of student involvement including: academic involvement, involvement with student peers, participation in work and other forms of involvement such as participation in sports, volunteering, other hobbies (pp. 71- 75). Kuh et al. (1991) suggested that student involvement can be enhanced by humanizing the campus environment and with Upcraft, Gardner and Associates (1989), and Astin, (1985) recommended changes to the physical environment which values people over things, modifications in the physiological environment to include peer acceptance, opportunities for challenge and support, adequate personal space to allow for reflection and internalization, an absence of anonymity and opportunities to develop sub communities. A total student experience was proposed, one that included a strong emphasis on student-faculty/student-staff interaction and equally beneficial out-of-class opportunities. Driessel (1969) suggested that greater student involvement stemmed from a desire for greater freedom; freedom on part with the rest of the nation, but not exceeding it; personal freedom with regard to dress, residence, and social activities; academic freedom surrounding professors and students to hear and put forth differing perspectives; and freedom from control and rules. He commented, "students do want the elimination of many rules and a general reduction of the number of rules. Yet their motivation is no wild urge to indulge in riot and licence. After all, rules on campus are an addition, not an alternative, to the rules of society as a whole" (p. 81).

Astin (1985) put forward five assumptions regarding involvement:

1. Involvement refers to the investment of physical as well as psychological energy and can be as generalized as the student experience, to very specific such as a chemistry exam;
2. Involvement occurs along a continuum and students will experience various degrees of involvement at various times;
3. Involvement can be both quantitative and qualitative in nature;
4. The amount of student learning and personal development is directly proportional to

the quantity and quality of student involvement;

5. The effectiveness of any educational policy is directly related to its capacity to increase student involvement (1985, pp. 135-136).

The National Education Association's (1970) Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities outlined a student's right to association, the right to participate in institutional government, and the right to freedom of inquiry and expression. This assertion suggested that student involvement can extend beyond the academic focus and social activities provided into areas of governance and leadership.

Giroux (1975) in his commentary on student government within schools, noted the failure of present day educators to give credence to the role of student government. He noted, "If student representative organizations and student activities programs are to function properly, they must be recognized by administrators and teachers as an integral part of the school community" (p. 2). In the same publication, Caulkins (1975) suggested a greater role for students in decision making and added, "No greater satisfaction awaits the principal than that of succeeding in humanizing and democratizing his school through the collaborative learning inherent in sharing the decision-making process of the school with his students" (p. 56).

Getting involved on a college campus is becoming more and more difficult for students. Boyer (1987), in his review of the undergraduate experience in America, saw students torn between the idealism of youth and the struggle of the "me" generation and taking all measures necessary to prepare for a future career path. The challenge for the university campus was to recognize and create those service opportunities for student involvement.

In presenting the prospect of the out-of-class experience influencing learning, Kuh et al. (1991) suggested four reasons why the out-of-class experience should be paid attention to as a factor in involvement:

> college students spend the majority of their time out of class; a student's peer group exerts considerable influence on how a student spends discretionary time and, thus, on how much time is devoted to study and other educationally purposeful activities; out-of-class experiences provide opportunities to acquire

> important skills that are not often addressed in the classroom; and participation in out-of-class activities contributes to a sense of community (pp. 11-12).

Kuh et al. (1991) encouraged institutions to foster opportunities for leadership involvement. They called on institutions to reexamine their approach to student participation, to review their mission with an eye to increasing the role of student governance, to know which leadership opportunities are available and to pay particular attention to those students who do get involved (pp. 316-317).

Wallace (1966) noted the influence of sororities and fraternities has been positively correlated to its influence on academics while Leemon (1972) determined their role as being vital in the transition of students to the campus community. Wallace (1966) also suggested that involvement among women is determined in part by the males they surround themselves with and the influence these males have on their university careers and beyond. Lipset (1971) regarded faculty as instrumental in promoting student involvement, as they "help to create a climate of opinion" (p. 32). Boyer (1987) pointed to the faculty's role as mentors and their influence on student culture, while Kuh et al. (1991) referred to the out-of-class faculty and student interactions as a positive contributor. Boyer (1987) also reported that orientation activities are "a time when friendships are formed and attitudes about collegiate life take shape" (p. 43). He encouraged institutions to develop well planned and coordinated programs of counselling and advising for all freshman students including part-time and graduate students. Kuh et al. (1991) identified the need for formal and informal orientation and welcoming activities as part of the student enculturation process on campus. Boyer (1987) contended that beyond academics, students should become involved in large and small group activities, recreation, campus organizations, and campus rituals. Kuh et al. (1991) also acknowledged the importance of the out-of-class experience to develop culture, to define learning, and to foster personal growth.

Boyer (1987) and Kuh et al. (1991) also noted the importance of residence living and the influence of the on-campus communities in promoting involvement. In particular, Kuh et al. (1991) added that residential life created "an environment conducive

to student learning and personal development" (p. 222). Boyer (1987) pointed to involvement beyond the traditional campus groups and activities, while Kuh et al. (1991) supported a systematic process they refer to as "Involving College" which develops opportunities for student involvement through a refocused institutional mission emphasizing an interpersonal climate.

Student governance has been recognized as a way of promoting student involvement. Boyer (1987) viewed student government "as an important community-building institution, but which on most campuses is not taken seriously by administrators or faculty" (p. 245). Kuh et al. (1991) contended that "good communities have group maintenance processes and governance structures that encourage participation and sharing of leadership tasks" (p. 371). Astin's (1985) Involvement Theory and calls by Boyer (1987) and Kuh et al. (1991) to increase involvement through student governance was an appeal to create an environment which stimulated student interest and the degree to which students want to take part in the university experience. It was important to provide opportunities which maximized student involvement throughout years the spent at university. Developing opportunities for student leadership involvement is seen as a plausible mechanism.

As the degree of student involvement is often determined by the nature of the campus environment and the climate created to support student organizations, the study will also focus on the relationship of student leadership within the larger institutional setting. Beyond student activities which create a sense of community, the influence of student government, residences, and fraternities will also be examined. Opportunities created within such organizations augment the out-of-class experience and generate positive feelings and overall student satisfaction with the university experience.

Leadership

Research on leadership is extensive and diverse (e.g., Hanson, 1996; Hoy & Miskel, 1982; Immegart, 1988; Nelson & Quick, 1994). Many perspectives describe leadership behaviour and facilitate an understanding of its interactive nature. Three warrant particular attention: Classical Theory with emphasis on psychological traits of

leaders (e.g., House & Baetz, 1979; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Stogdill, 1974); the Social System perspective which focuses on relationship among environment, workers, and organization (e.g., Deal, 1985; Fiedler & Chemers, 1974; House, 1971; Schein, 1985); and the Open Systems perspective, highlighting a relationship between internal and external environments (e.g.,Burns, 1978; Lipham, 1974; Sashkin & Burke, 1990; Sergiovanni, 1989). From the Open Systems viewpoint, transformational leadership theory (Hanson, 1996) suggested higher order change which takes into account "an integrative fit between the processes and the products of the micro (internal) and the macro (external) environments" (pp. 179-181).

Interaction between internal and external environments (e.g., Selznick, 1957; 1969; 1984; Sergiovanni, 1984; 1992) and a relationship to a "Symbolic Thought Frame" (e.g., Bolman & Deal, 1991) recognized its on-going influence within an organization. Similarly, Selznick (1984) called on the need for creative leadership, "the art of institution-building, the reworking of human and technological materials to fashion an organism that embodies new and enduring values" (pp. 152-153). Sergiovanni (1984) elaborated on a qualitative interpretation, what the leader stands for, how behaviours and actions are translated and affect others. "The object of leadership is the stirring of human consciousness, the interpretation and enhancement of meanings, the articulations of key cultural strands, and the linking of organizational members to them" (p. 8).

Promoting a value perspective, Hodgkinson's (1991) theory of leadership was described as "transrational, rational, and subrational" (p. 97). As well, Selznick (1984) defined culture and institution building as "to infuse with value," (p. 17). "It is something that happens to an organization over time, reflecting the organization's own distinctive history, the people who have been in it, the groups it embodies and the vested interests they created, and the way it has adapted to its environment" (p. 16).

Bolman and Deal (1991) discussed leadership and power and observed that, "This [power] is usually seen as an attribute that individuals or systems possess-an attribute based on the resources that they are able to control" (p. 286). Foster (1986) rebutted the role of power in leadership arguing in particular that "followers can be leaders and leaders

followers. Leadership is based on shared culture and does not result from position or power" (p. 182).

Nanus (1992) extolled the positive influence of vision in its ability to bring those elements in line with the future plans of an organization. Vision is defined as "a realistic, credible, attractive, future for the organization" (Nanus, 1992, p. 8). It enabled the leader, along with followers, to set a direction of not only where the organization is and could be, but more importantly, where the organization could be if it hopes to remain competitive and to survive.

Several theories and some elements of leadership have been presented to outline diverse perspectives and suggest various approaches used to examine leadership behaviour. For purposes of this study, the interaction between internal and external environments will be examined and focus on student leadership in a student organization as part of a larger institutional setting. Furthermore, elements of leadership behaviour suggested in the literature, as perceived by student leaders, will be addressed and its contribution to leadership behaviour.

Leadership Effectiveness

Early studies in leadership by Fiedler (1967) categorized effective leaders as task-oriented or relationship-oriented and "upon the appropriate matching of leadership style and the degree of favourableness of the group situation for the leader, that is, the degree to which the situation provides the leader with influence over the group members" (p. 151). More recently, Hanson (1996) suggested that effective leadership is "an influence process directed at either individual or a group. . . leadership requires attention to individuals and organizations" (p. 156). Focussing on characteristics of effective leadership, Cunningham and Gresso (1993) identified: shared vision, spirit of collegiality, open and free-flowing communication, a climate of mutual support and growth, and work with values (pp. 267-268) in its pursuit of organizational goals.

Initially, Sotirin (1987) attributed a leader's effectiveness to charismatic qualities; qualities which enable the leader to seek obedience and commitment from followers who are willing to give the leader moral authority to lead them and pursue organizational

goals. Leadership effectiveness has also examined differences between transactional and transformative styles of leadership (e.g., Hunt & Osborne, 1982; Sergiovanni, 1989). Bennis and Nanus (1985) advocated transformative leadership as "a symbolic relationship between leaders and followers. What makes leadership effective is the interplay between followers' needs and the leader's capacity to understand" (p. 217). Supporting the effectiveness of transactional versus transformational leaders, Sashkin and Burke (1990) noted the ability of the latter to empower workers and improve organizational performance. In addition, Hollander and Offerman (1990) determined leadership effectiveness as a collaborative endeavour between leader and responsive followers and questioned the tradition of leader as an independent entity in the process.

Promoting effectiveness of leadership, Schein (1985) attributed the ability of a leader and followers to understand, develop, and support individual and group needs within the context of an organization. As well, McGrath (1984) examined the needs of an individual and ability of a leader and followers to share needs and facilitate the promotion of a culture within an organization. In particular, needs for inclusion and identity within an organization and ability of a leader and followers share in its promotion.

Bolman (1976) promoted organizational learning which can be effective "if the barriers are outweighed by people's awareness of the existing problems within their organization, by their desire to enhance the ability to behave congruently with their espoused values" (p. 186). In addition, Schein (1985) suggested that effective leadership is recognition and identification of elements which enhance organizational performance. As well, Ortiz (1986) agreed that an organization can be changed through activities, relational patterns and attitudes, and redefinition of organizational functions. Gawreluck (1993) identified other ways in which an effective leader modified an organization including:

> role modelling; creating and supporting organizational symbols, creating and reinforcing organizational values and beliefs; supporting and enacting ceremonies, rites, and myths; identifying heroes and heroines; developing and implementing organizational vision, mission statements, policies, goal and objectives; creating, implementing and evaluating organizational strategies; and implementing and reinforcing structural designs, formal communications, and leadership practices

(p. 12).

Sashkin and Burke (1990) supported the effectiveness of transactional versus transformational leaders and ability of the latter to empower workers and improve organizational performance. Bolman and Deal (1991) encouraged reframing leadership; leadership which is less determined by position but more by relationships. Leadership of context is key; leadership which is not simply focussed on finding one right way but invites several options. Leadership became more effective when several organizational frames (structural, human resources, political, symbolic) were considered and a leader was prepared to shift from one frame to an other in order to maximize effectiveness.

Schein (1985) cultivated the effectiveness of leadership based on the ability of the leader and followers to understand, develop, and support individual and group needs within the context of an organization. However, "We need to understand what is meant, in this context, by the concept of 'sharing' and to be able to explain the learning mechanisms involved in the adoption of a solution to a problem. All definitions of culture involve the concept of shared solutions, shared understandings, and consensus; yet it is not at all clear how human sharing comes about" (p. 149).

Morrison (1992) recognized diversity as an ignored issue among leaders seeking effectiveness. Organizational diversity creates a right mix for the organization to achieve desired results. He added:

> The hard realities of competition and the marketplace are convincing many executives that diversity is a necessary part of their business strategy. . . sound management of diversity affects costs savings, creativity, problem solving, flexibility, marketing, and resource acquisition, in addition to social responsibility (p. 18).

Supporting the call for diversity in the workplace, Nixon (1992) encouraged leaders to move away from the leader as the "all-knowing, all-seeing" decision maker that everyone looks up to and supports, that abilities lie in all members of the organization and the leader should empower workers to release creative abilities and energies. Cunningham and Gresso (1993) identified characteristics such as: shared vision, spirit of collegiality, open and free-flowing communication, a climate of mutual support and growth, and work

with values (pp. 267-268) in its pursuit of organizational goals. Cooperation and collaboration are therefore encouraged to enhance a leader's effectiveness and influence an organization. Cunningham and Gresso (1993) reported that trust developed as people exposed themselves, were allowed to succeed and to fail, and were willing to take risks together. "Trust tends to reduce fear of dependency on others and eliminates the potentially negative effects of conflicts" (p. 121). Conflict can be reduced or eliminated because the level of trust which had been reached by the leader and followers allowed for differing perspectives and input from all possible sources. Conflict was seen as a struggle for competing values and the competition was all but eliminated once agreement on values had been reached. Trust also allowed followers to challenge the leader and put forth conflicting points of view without fear of reprisal. Collaboration became a key component of organizations which now had agreement and decision making occurred just as often horizontally as it did vertically. Agreement and support of shared organizational values by both the leader and followers led to the ability for shared decision making and reaching decisions by consensus. "They join together to discuss shared interests and values, to create mutually agreed to policy and procedure, and most importantly to create mutual trust and cooperation" (Cunningham & Gresso, 1993, p. 125). Consensus grew from an appreciation of both parties and trusting that those agreed to values would be best for the organization.

Group cohesion emerged as more and more individuals in the group came to identify with a suggestion and support it. As approval grew, interaction among members increased and exacted more and more influence on each other and on the group as a whole. Hughes, Ginnett, and Curphy (1993) reported that the phenomenon of group cohesiveness could be seen as positive leading to lower turnover, lower absenteeism, and higher performance. However, Alderfer (1977) and Ginnett (1987) reported that group cohesiveness could also produce "over bounding" which is seen as blocking of outside resources which do not fit group norms and could make them more effective. In addition, Janis (1982) recognized the possibility of "groupthink" among highly cohesive group, a product of norms so well established, they were rarely challenged. Shephard (1991)

identified another possible issue with highly cohesive group, a recent phenomenon known as ollieism and potentially more damaging than groupthink. Ollieism occurred when members of a group initiate illegal actions in their zeal to show loyalty and supported for the leader.

Although research on leadership effectiveness focussed initially on the role and qualities of a leader, recent studies have examined the need for a relationship to exist between leader and followers. Such interaction creates a sense of belonging and the ability to collaborate for the sake of the organization. Role modelling, establishing goals and objectives, various roles that members play aid in strengthening relationships within the group. Followers have become even more important if an organization is to achieve and a leader must make every effort to develop an environment of mutual respect and trust, focussing on collaboration and consensus building in order to build a cohesive working unit. Many elements of leadership effectiveness and the relationship within a group context will also be the focus of the study.

Student Leadership

Student leadership is identified as an opportunity which allows students to become involved in the university community, to make a contribution, and to gain skills which will be of benefit now and in the future. The importance of this co-curricular experience must be noted in the context of its affect on the community and individuals involved. Boyer (1987) recognized the potential of student leadership on a college campus. "Student government should be an important community-building institution" (p. 245). He added, "undergraduates should be encouraged not only to understand how decisions are made at the college where they are enrolled, but also they should be asked, indeed expected, to participate as campus citizens as well" (p. 246). He also noted the role that faculty and the administration must play in encouraging that type of student leadership to flourish.

Newton (1981) listed certain principles which influence the development of student leadership: the pursuit of self-actualization as manifested in the pursuit of leadership; leadership enhancement as a function of learning; individuals seeking

leadership as a basis for improvement; and leadership as part of a continuum of objectives. Student leadership manifests itself in several different ways, through different avenues. Lawson (1981) supported student leadership initiatives and its developmental benefits as further recognition of the leverage accorded those opportunities and how this credibility served to create an environment of support, influence, and validity to student leadership as an educational merit as well as a recognized authority on the campus.

Hazary (1987) identified behavioural norms in student leadership which are formed according to alliance to political parties, student unrest brought on by a variety of social causes, lapses in the administration, and a distancing from the academic community. As well, Lawson (1981) outlined student leadership roles as managers of associations, representatives of constituents on a variety of committees on campus, agents for student needs and interests, supervisors of staff, and developers of programs and services. In short, "the environment of college and university student associations is replete with developmentally-based opportunities for student growth within increasingly complex situations and responsibilities (pp. 139-140).

Recognizing the role of student government, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (1970), Morison (1970), and Lawson (1981) supported student government in fostering leadership. While Giroux (1975) was cynical regarding the effectiveness of student government, Morison (1970) called for more decentralized and individualized efforts to include student leaders in decision making. Similarly, Lawson (1981) viewed student government as integral to the life of any institution and invited university officials and student government mentors to take a serious look at efforts to improve student governance on campus. As well, Frederick (1965) reported that student participation in self-government upholds principles of Western democracy, but that "In conventional terms, student councils are part of education for citizenship; basic to all student organizations is the doctrine that the young are citizens, that citizenship is conferred at birth, not at age eighteen or twenty-one" (p. 8). Giroux (1975) called on present day educators to give credence to the role of student government. "If student representative organizations and student activities programs are to function

properly, they must be recognized by administrators and teachers as an integral part of the school community" (p. 2). In addition, Frederick (1965) described the objectives of student government were in line with overall value aims of education and included: "responsibility, initiative, leadership, fellowship, self-control, self-reliance, cooperation, respect for law and order, honesty, obedience to law, and effective citizenship" (p. 9). However, Kelly and Konrad (1972) reported that student government only becomes effective if a greater role is taken in policy making and implementation. Sergiovanni (1984) and Roberts (1981) alluded to the apprehension regarding the lack of quality student leadership opportunities while Sergiovanni (1984) recognized the need to pursue the study of leadership beyond necessary skills and wide ranging meanings.

While acknowledged for its educational merit and positive effect on the university experience, little is known of various influences on student leadership and contributors to student leadership behaviour. In particular, the study will focus on past experiences generating initial involvement as well as spurring participation in leadership activities. Campus influences will be examined as factors to leadership involvement and more importantly to leadership behaviour. Among such factors prior to and including university, the study will focus on significant learning which has taken place and benefits derived from student involvement as contributors to leadership behaviour.

Student Leadership and Past Experiences

Influence of community. Past experiences and its relationship to present student leadership involvement is still unclear. Several studies reviewed the relationship of community and leadership. Gentelia (1986) discussed community influence in her study on an Eastern Michigan University pilot program designed to promote law-related education and partnerships between the university and local communities. The goal of the project was to develop among high school student participants the knowledge, leadership skills, and attitudes that lead to success at school, at work, and in the community. Hall and Kielsmeier (1985) outlined an innovative youth program designed to instill self-confidence, positive regard for Cherokee identity, and a sense of community spirit through service to others. Drum (1988) reported on a conference focussing on

youth leadership and the understanding of leadership as a service performed in the context of a community. Leadership was generally seen as an intentional action that influenced the course of events. Most participants to the conference wanted young people to develop leadership skills that would serve the welfare of their community and the world.

As well the influence of service clubs and organizations was outlined. Rockwell, Stohler, and Rudman (1984) explored how adults felt their 4-H experience contributed to their selection of advanced education and/or a career and helped them with leadership skills in their occupations or community activities. Benefits identified most frequently as being received from the 4-H program were learning a specific skill and having a chance to meet people. Theilheimer (1988) examined Operation SMART (Science, Math and Relevant Technology), a project of the Girls Clubs of America, a national organization serving mostly low-income girls in local club centres.

Work supervisors and their influence on subordinates was also identified in the literature. Adler (1983) examined the similarity in behaviour tendencies of subordinates and their supervisors. Results largely supported the applicability of Social Learning Theory to organizational modelling.

Influence of schools. Schools provide needed structure and an initial environment for student leadership, particularly student government. Simms (1974) pointed to the influence of fellow students on student leaders. Brechtel, Wright, and Brechtel (1982) described a community college leadership training seminar for high school students and its positive influence on leadership styles, relationship to current roles, improvement in working relationship with school personnel, and development of team-building, organizational, and planning skills. Harville (1969) provided some early identification of potential student leaders among students in schools. Maher (1985) outlined a five year old student leadership program in a New York state high school, a year-round multi-faceted program that served the needs of students, school, and community. McCullough (1994) examined the behaviour of high school student leaders based on characteristics such as self-esteem, locus of control, family structure, and career goals.

Rollow and Bryk (1993) featured school communities that advance or impede change and demonstrated the importance of neighbourhood contexts and school leadership.

Davies (1980) discussed the advantages of student self-government and the work of student committees in setting up a student coffee shop, planning school sports, and orienting new students. Scharf (1990) described experimental schools run by the democratic method, with students having an equal voice in decisions on school government, revealed the importance of educating and preparing the young for understanding the obligations of enlightened citizenship in a democratic society. Maher (1984) explored a student-initiated course in leadership to develop students' responsibility. The year-long course was part of the regular curriculum, drawing on communication and reasoning skills. Each participant began with self-development and proceeded to school and community service projects. Serwatka, Deering, and Stoddard (1989) examined the relationship between the under representation of Black students in gifted education and particular school-related and socioeconomic-status-related variables. Horner, Maddux, and Green (1986) briefly outlined the National Research Council's 1979 study of minority student representation in special education classes.

Influence of role models and mentors. Role models, mentors and their influence was also discussed. Armstrong and Armstrong (1996) identified charisma and inspirational leadership as the most important characteristics of transformational leaders but also other key components including positive modelling, sharing vision, and empowering others. Treat, Cummings, Seevers, and Wright (1995) looked at the "Building Bridges" Leadership/Mentor Project, a model leadership intern experience with emphasis on minority group involvement. It had four goals: to foster an environment in which cultural diversity was understood and valued; to increase work force participation of minority groups; to provide opportunities for leadership mentoring and role modelling; and to enhance employability and career success in the food and agricultural sciences. Stasz, Shavelson, and Stasz (1985) examined whether male and female teachers provided leadership in the microcomputer movement and presented equally viable role models.

Stahlhut and Hawkes (1990) reported how student teachers perceived their

cooperating teacher's leadership practices and identified leadership styles used by mentors: (a) directing--telling student teachers what, how, and when to perform structured tasks and expecting precision and productive output; (b) coaching--demonstrating, modelling, developing talent, and resolving conflicts considerately; (c) supporting--maintaining harmony, praising, and emphasizing consideration; and (d) delegating--allowing freedom to experiment, tolerating uncertainty, and facilitating. Hartman and Harris (1992) presented a study of parental influence on leadership styles and reported that correlations between students and their role models showed that early influence is important to leadership qualities. Shandley (1989) discussed the benefits of college mentoring programs for enhancing students' leadership abilities.

Influence of residence halls and fraternities. Residence halls, fraternities, and their influence was also addressed. Stamatakos (1984) challenged the effectiveness of housing professionals in programming and student development and identified four problem areas that call for educational leadership responses: (a) volatility of student living conditions; (b) program inadequacy and contradiction; (c) institutional narcissism; and (d) absence of faculty role models. Stage, Schuh, Hossler, and Westfall (1991) examined several issues regarding the usefulness of student development theory to professionals and senior level paraprofessionals in residence halls. Stonewater (1988) used Perry's scheme of intellectual development to describe an informal model of cognitive development assessment and suggested resident characteristics that residence hall staff might detect in students regarding topics students and staff encounter in halls.

Wilson, Anderson, and Fleming (1987) measured college maladjustment, psycho social development, and degree of fusion in family system of students enrolled in an undergraduate course. Commuting college students demonstrated poorer personal adjustments and greater over involvement in their parental relationships than did students in residence halls. Arndt (1975) outlined the educational potential of residence halls and need to be better understood and utilized as well as a plea for faculty members to associate themselves with programs of student residence halls and their directors.

Beamer (1975) presented four notions of community in residence: values, developmental socialization, identity, and group living; and discussed why each must receive the attention of professionals if residence halls are to achieve a sense of community.

Pounder (1990) presented a discussion of factors influencing the hall atmosphere in comparison of freshman women's residence hall, an undergraduate women's hall, and a coed hall. Williams and Reilley (1991) provided a review of the recent educational research concerning the impact of residence halls on students. Lynch and Hall (1968) looked at freshman women in three residence halls at the University of Florida and how they rated their volunteer advisors on helpfulness regarding college adjustment. Montgomery (1968) investigated housing patterns and preferences for married and single graduate. Bales and Sharp (1981) offered tangible proof of the continued viability of women's colleges. Women's colleges had a positive effect on intellectual self-esteem and women were more likely to attain positions of leadership, to become involved in student government, to develop high aspirations, and to persist to graduation.

Dadez (1991) assessed the effects of involvement upon the individual development of certain first year undergraduate students residing in Michigan State University residence halls. There were no differences of initial involvement within the two treatment groups. There were also no involvement differences among the three groups over the intervention period of 32 weeks. As well, there were no differences of initial development among the three groups. Kuder (1972) compared fraternity and non-fraternity upperclassmen and showed significant differences for the residence hall men in the areas of social conscience, satisfaction with major, and peer independence; and, for the fraternity sample, in the area of extracurricular involvement. Gifford (1968) examined how fraternities were regarded: in what areas were they held in high esteem? how were they misunderstood? how could they best attract future members.

Kimborough (1996) determined the impact of membership in a historically Black fraternity or sorority on Black student involvement and leadership development, based on the campus type. Fraternity members were significantly more likely to be members of six selected student groups than non-fraternity members, as well as hold more elected and

appointed positions. Haemmerle (1996) explored the relationships of sorority and fraternity leaders' personal characteristics, shifts in their organizational status, and their subsequent counterproductive behaviour. Members showed extensive and unexpected gender differences in their perceptions of organizational climate across leader status.

Crookston (1993) developed an operational model based on social psychological theory. The author advocated the creation of an intentional democratic community in college residence halls and presented ten elements of the community that must be manipulated, nine design considerations, and seven stages of development. Cahill (1969) discussed the role of students in residence hall governance and total student control where student conduct was concerned, including legislating rules, apprehending violators, and adjudicating penalties. Hoelting (1974) described a new concept of hall government aimed at reducing student apathy, whereby all hall activity monies are handled by a central budgeting agency and appropriated according to student interest. Any size group could request funds, provided its project improved the social, cultural, athletic, or scholastic development of those within the hall.

Influence of the university environment. On the influence of the university environment, Hopkins (1996) suggested techniques for developing leaders among two-year college students. Rockingham (1990) outlined the Student Leadership Development Program at Southern Illinois University. The program was designed to provide students with opportunities to: (a) gain knowledge about leadership, effective leaders, and their qualities; (b) participate in the democratic process through citizenship experiences; and (c) serve the university and community. Cooper, Healy, and Simpson (1994) used the Student Developmental Task and Lifestyle Inventory (SDTLI) and found student change patterns related to membership and leadership in student organizations. Hernandez (1987) determined the relationship between college experiences and later achievements as community leaders. Many leaders were found to have lived on campus for at least one year and then to have moved off campus into an apartment. The most prevalent extracurricular activities for community leaders were Greek social fraternities or sororities, personal interest activities, academic related organizations, and varsity

sports. Those who lived on campus or in an apartment were more involved in extracurricular activities than those who lived elsewhere.

Gordon (1975) assessed characteristics, experiences, and activities related to the perceived leadership abilities of college of education students and found that apart from gender, none of the other demographic characteristics had a significant influence on leadership factors. Erwin and Marcus-Mendoza (1988) examined Kuhl's motivational theory, cognitive development, leadership abilities, participation in church activities, and educational objectives among college students and found action-oriented students more committed to making decisions, less likely to view world in narrow terms, more confident in their leadership abilities, more likely to have held some office, and had higher educational goals than those who were state-oriented. Sawyer (1988) used orientation programs to promote qualities of planning, delegation, communication, decision making, situational analysis, relationship building, initiative, risk taking, stress management, and program evaluation.

Young (1986) addressed the need for nontraditional college students to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to assume leadership roles. Silien (1992) focussed on new concepts and developments in student leadership theory, research, and practice in higher education, including such issues as a shifting of cultural and gender issues surrounding leadership, rapidly changing demographics, assessment of leadership development, and community building. Fitch (1987) surveyed college students belonging to community service campus organizations to investigate characteristics, motivations of student volunteers, and the interrelationship between demographic variables and reasons for volunteering. Downey, Bosco, and Silver (1984) examined postgraduate achievement, employment history, and perceptions of college experiences. Expected differences between the two groups were not found either in terms of short-term or long-term effects. Schlesinger and Baldridge (1982) suggested that one result of student activism in past decades was the formalization of student participation and proposed student influence may be declining due to career interests and increases in state control.

Groves and Groves (1994) explored potential outcomes of out-of-classroom

experiences as an educational vehicle for complimenting instructional efforts of higher education. Three example student services explored were student rights, student government, and student counselling. Kelley (1994) introduced ad hocracy, an emerging alternative system of junior college government, which encouraged informal student involvement, allowing students to participate in activities of special interest without demanding lengthy commitments.

Cox and Marks (1984) discussed student representation in academic government with particular reference to the academic boards of the 30 designated polytechnics in England and Wales. Bell (1986) questioned the value of traditional student government at community colleges and suggested several alternatives. Student government, as now conceived, was largely irrelevant to older students, part-time students, married students, and working students. Deegan (1985) reported on a study which reviewed student successes and failures in an on-going student controlled program, where accountability, persistence, and continuing commitment were required. Rast and James (1973) discussed what can be done with the design of student government organizations to make them more responsive to the needs of the student body. Deegan and O'Banion (1989) outlined that the success of student government activities on any campus was significantly affected by the amount of student participation permitted in the institution's decision-making processes. The traditional model of government characterized by tokenism often resulted in a separate jurisdictions model characterized by fragmentation and interest groups.

Gilmore and Scott (1995) presented: (a) the historical development of student government; (b) recent developments in the modern university; (c) six possible consequences for student government in the future; and (d) an evaluation of future possibilities. Lepchenske (1978) explored the formal and informal roles of student government in college organization and how each role differed in small community colleges. Two different models for student government operation were reviewed: a power-driven organization that described the status quo and a purpose-driven organization that illustrated options available to college administrators. Moore (1995) reviewed the literature and the recent history of student participation in college and

university governance and presented data from studies attempting to assess the nature and extent of such participation and examined learning opportunities in student participation.

Remley and Ruby (1993) discussed situations in which administrators were justified in substituting their decisions for those of students, offered rationale and legal foundation for such actions, gave suggested processes to follow for administrators who feel that students decisions were inappropriate, and discussed situations illustrating that administrators sometimes must overturn student decisions. Klepper (1988) provided information and observations on student governance in Chinese higher education. Boatman (1988) discussed the ideal student government and the ideal student government advisor by advisors who met at the National Association of College Administrators' National Student Government Workshop. Key issues in a strong student government were described including information, access, mutual respect, and institutional impact. Downey, Bosco, and Silver (1984) compared college experiences, adult accomplishment, and employment history of former student government participants and nonparticipants. Results revealed no unique long-term effects from student government participation. However, student activity in general was related to job satisfaction and well-being.

Kraack (1985) discussed the link between involvement in student activities programs and the interpersonal and cognitive development of college students. A most interesting finding of this study was the relationship between involvement in organizations high in democratic governance (shared authority, conflict resolution mechanisms, permeable boundaries), and college students' levels of maturity. Johnson (1995) examined effective leadership in multiracial, multiethnic environments. The study revealed that several of the seniors interviewed have had limited college student leadership experience in multiracial, multiethnic environments. Many experience feelings of intimidation in these environments, and find communication across racial and ethnic lines especially challenging. Mink (1993) discussed diversification of college populations which means that student leadership training must move students beyond tolerance/sensitization, teaching them to value and embrace other cultures. Ideals of leadership must be taught from various cultural perspectives, encouraging students to

challenge their own values and beliefs and make positive changes.

Handel (1993) examined the contributions of intercollegiate athletic participation to the leadership development of student-athletes. Men's and women's basketball programs had a strong impact on the leadership development of students. Quinn (1992) believed that students can be provided with opportunities to develop such skills as communication, organization, and decision making while interacting with others in the physical education environment. Triponey (1989) identified alternative leadership experiences in which college and university students become involved, found that students were involved in a variety of alternative leadership experiences, and suggested that more students were involved in alternative leadership than traditional leadership positions.

Shandley (1988) explored the role that perceptions play in determining effective leadership. Findings suggested that there was no important relationship between organizational subcultures and perceptions of leadership. Sessa (1990) involved eight college student government leaders from the metropolitan Boston area in extensive unstructured, informal, and semi-focussed interviews in an attempt to understand who these student government leaders were; what common characteristics, concerns, views, and future goals they shared. Findings indicated that all student leaders reported a history of extensive extracurricular participation and highly supportive family backgrounds which encouraged success. All but one student leader emphasized moderation, competence, flexibility, political give-and-take, and compromise as necessary and desirable ingredients to successful interaction and accomplishment.

Romano (1994) examined characteristics of women student presidents of campus-wide, coeducational student organizations at three large institutions of higher education in the Midwest. The study found that: (a) families were very influential in the lives of these young women, especially strong women role models; (b) most of the women were comfortable dealing with conflict and competition and showed no evidence that they were afraid of success or achievement; (c) the study did not reveal negative experiences as a result of their gender or being leaders at large coeducational institutions;

(d) the women learned to be leaders from observing others and by practising leadership; (e) the students concluded they learned a variety of skills and knowledge as a result of their leadership experience; (f) the importance of peer relationships and interaction with others was supported; (g) students who were engaged in leadership activities outside the classroom tended to be high achievers, and may constitute a student subculture; (h) the importance of the advisor to student leaders was confirmed; (i) gender was an issue for the respondents, not in terms of how they behaved as leaders but how others perceived them; (j) students of colour were more likely to be hurt and discouraged by racial issues on their campuses, were likely to be asked to participate in more committees and other activities because of their race, and dealt with others' perceptions of them based on racial stereotypes and preconceived ideas; (k) leadership style and stages of leadership development may be related to cognitive processes; and (l) respondents' ideas about leadership were closely tied to relationships with the members of the organization.

Past experiences often determine the level of satisfaction and the degree to which students will continue leadership activities in the future. Home communities and activities surrounding schools, sports, work, and other programs set the stage for initial involvement as well as participation in leadership activities. Upon arrival at university, various clubs and organizations including fraternities and residences create an initial social network, a sense of belonging with the institution, and generate an overall positive feeling regarding the university experience. Role models and mentors also play a significant role throughout the lives of student leaders. Among them are parents and siblings, teachers, coaches, work supervisors, university professors, and even peers. Strong bonds of friendship and support are created as these individuals become powerful influences on student leaders for many years. Varied experiences and an encouraging environment provide a framework for future involvement and contribute to leadership behaviour.

Student Leadership and Behaviour

Student leadership behaviour.

Factors and characteristics influencing student leadership behaviour were reviewed. Cleveland (1982) argued that the generalist's

breadth of knowledge was an indispensable quality for leadership and pointed out that general international leadership was rare in an era when public opinion was instrumental in forming policy. Hart (1994) discussed how successful leaders interact with group members and draw on their skills and knowledge. She examined some principles of interaction and socialization that support a view of effective leadership in schools--that of leadership as social validation.

Raiola (1995) outlined the most important skill for the transformational leader is building relationships through positive and effective communication and also provided guidelines for supporting and encouraging group members, setting the tone for the group, modelling communication behaviours, use of voice patterns, active listening, reflective communication (paraphrasing), clarification techniques (questioning, summarizing), information giving, and self-disclosure. Lashway (1997) discussed "transformational" models of leadership that emphasize collaboration and empowerment. The facilitative leader's role was to foster the involvement of employees at all different levels. Hart and Kean (1996) suggested key characteristics of an effective college student leader were defined by: consistency in word and action; ownership of responsibility for actions and leadership position; development of healthy relationships with friends, coworkers, mentors, and mentees; and ethical decision making. Posner and Brodsky (1992) used a leadership inventory to survey fraternity chapter presidents on leadership behaviours (challenging, inspiring, enabling, modelling, encouraging) as viewed by executive committee members and the latter's assessment of chapter presidents's effectiveness.

Fracaroli and Fitzhugh-Pemberton (1996) described ways advisors could use vocational student organizations as leadership laboratories. Fitzhugh-Pemberton explained the value to students of joining Future Business Leaders of America-Phi Beta Lambda. Kustaa (1993) reported on a qualitative study of African-American leadership effectiveness as perceived and defined by African-American student leaders. Students provided definitions of leadership in terms of: (a) goals of leadership; (b) charismatic leadership; (c) style of leadership; (d) dynamics of diplomacy, creativity, and communication; and (e) leader behaviour. Overall, many participants felt that

African-American student leaders faced a peculiar challenge due in some measure to the under representation of their group. Nolfi and Forney (1993) used focus groups to assess existing college student leadership efforts and as a step in developing better programs.

Hansen and Braglio-Luther (1980) presented the theory and practice of leadership styles, communication skills, and problem solving. Through learning activities and practice, participants gained experience in communication, agenda sharing, goal setting, and personal leadership style. Participants also learned about the communication process, barriers to effective communication, questions effective in furthering communication, planning group meetings, preparing for meetings, survey and consensus techniques, brainstorming, force field analysis, and leadership. Posner and Brodsky (1994) surveyed fraternity and sorority presidents and executive committee members and revealed that practices of effective student leaders did not vary according to gender. Effective leaders, both male and female, engaged in challenging, inspiring, enabling, modelling, and encouraging practices. Komives (1994) assessed self-perceptions of empowering leadership and achieving style practised by female student leaders and found female student leaders to be most comfortable with empowering leadership practices.

Meeting behaviour. Studies of meeting behaviour also provided some interesting findings. Zemon (1996) discussed the quality of committee leadership in terms of coaching, communicating, and troubleshooting skills. Bostrom (1995) argued that critical meeting facilitation skills supported a collaborative group approach to working and learning. McHargue (1996) outlined the use of retreats as very effective vehicles for professional growth, providing an opportunity to discuss experiences and different issues. Shelton and Bauer (1994) described how to make meetings more efficient and effective. It outlined: (a) the correlation between excellent meetings and excellent results; (b) how to plan, open, conduct, and follow through with meetings; and (c) strategies for managing problems that arise during meetings. Mount and Zwernik (1990) described a workbook designed for people interested in facilitating Personal Futures Planning, a person-centred creative planning process designed to help people craft a life of meaning and contribution for a person with developmental disabilities.

Hall (1992) discussed successful leadership in meetings looking at differing philosophies about the role of the group leader, different roles assumed by group members, minimal responsibilities that the leader must fulfill, and specific suggestions for maintaining the group's interest during the meeting. DeLuca (1983) analysed the meeting as an important organizational tool for principals and discussed the structure and functions of meetings, the role of the leader, and group dynamics. Marsh (1992) helped leaders of meetings develop a repertoire of responses that they can use to maintain control over meetings when individuals attempt, consciously or unconsciously, to dominate those meetings. Lindelow and Heynderickx (1989) offered suggestions to help educators improve their performance in meetings, both as group leaders and as participants. Arnot, Cary, and Houde (1985) provided a handbook to help the volunteer leader become more effective and discussed essentials for effective meetings; tips for discussion leaders; types of committees, major functions, and suggestions for making committees more effective; functions of leadership; and detailed instructions for using group activities mentioned elsewhere in the book. Ratteray (1984) detailed the use of an executive summary for a productive follow-up of meetings and seminars.

Role modelling and leadership. The relationship between role modelling and leadership was also investigated. White, Riley, Davies, and Twinn (1990) examined connections among teaching, support, supervision, and role modelling in clinical areas in nursing education courses within the context of Britain's Project 2000, an educational reform initiative. Bronts, Brouwer, Martens, and Proper (1995) discussed data modelling techniques for the design of information systems and presented the idea of defining a kernel for object role modelling (ORM) techniques upon which different drawing styles can be based.

Roche (1990) examined mechanisms to foster and develop leadership skills among women, pharmacy's fastest growing demographic segment. Role-modelling, mentoring, and networking have worked well for men and lended themselves to women's sharing style of leadership. Trachtenberg (1988) outlined that good leadership depended on the ability to tolerate anxiety, loneliness, and the threat of unpopularity. This ability

was more likely to be developed by the observation of good role models in action than through formal training. Hart and Kean (1996) defined key characteristics of an effective college student leader as: consistency in word and action; ownership of responsibility for actions and leadership position; development of healthy relationships with friends, coworkers, mentors, and mentees; and ethical decision making. It was argued that leadership was a full-time job and that student leaders were role models for those who followed them.

Leadership and pressure. The relationship between pressure and leadership was also presented. Rogal (1996) recounted how an Iowa junior high school improv company (called "Pressure Points") tackled tough issues, educating their audiences about the dangers of alcohol and drugs; the effects of divorce; the realities of AIDS, rape, and suicide; and about the difficulties of growing up in a risk-filled world. Neumann (1991) examined selected aspects of internal college leadership during financially troubled times and associated pressures.

Factors and characteristics influencing student leadership behaviour included the support of group members, communication, and ethical decision making. Appropriate meeting behaviour outlined the role of the group leader as well as various roles assumed by members. Finally, proper modelling behaviour was also highlighted and the need for leaders to be appropriate role models for group members and peers. All contribute to desired leadership behaviour and are determined by previous and present influences.

Student Leadership and Benefits

Benefits of student leadership and student leadership involvement were outlined. Cherulnik (1989) looked at the influence of appearance on leadership processes by examining the effect of attractiveness on the actual performance of a leadership task. Comparative analysis of ratings revealed a significant positive correlation between appearance and performance ratings. Sermersheim (1996) surveyed past leaders of college Greek organizations (chapter presidents, Panhellenic councils, Greek service organizations) at Western Illinois University and investigated the impact of Greek leadership experience on work-related and personal life skills. Ninety-five percent felt

their undergraduate Greek leadership position was extremely beneficial and prepared them for their chosen profession.

Seevers (1995) used Future Farmers of America members to assess the content, construct validity, and dimensionality of a youth leadership life skills development instrument. Dormody and Seevers (1994) determined predictors of youth leadership life skills development among Future Farmers of America (FFA) members in Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico. Findings indicated that achievement expectancy had a positive relationship with youth leadership life skills development. Seevers and Dormody (1994) surveyed 4-H participants in Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico and showed that participation in leadership activities positively affected youth leadership life skills development. Skill development was also related to achievement expectancy.

Karnes and Meriweather (1989) discussed an approach to developing leadership potential which involved having gifted students write and implement leadership plans focussing on an important area of needed change in the student's school, community, or religious affiliation. Young (1986) addressed the need for college students to develop the knowledge and skills necessary to assume leadership roles. A paradigm was presented for use in the procedural leadership development of college students who are members of nontraditional leadership populations and individuals with either minimal leadership experience, apparent interest in leadership service, or potential leadership talent.

Gray and Pfeiffer (1987) described a book written for students who wish to enhance their leadership potential and skills. Munson and Zwilling (1986) outlined a guide developed to assist 4-H club leaders in implementing a youth leadership skills project. Leadership skills were categorized into three levels: personal skills, skills working within groups, and skills leading groups. Schuh and Laverty (1983) reported on the long-term positive benefits of student leadership. Preissler and Hadley (1992) examined the relationship between academic major and co-curricular leadership activities' influence on college students' ability to make mature career choices and found that students who held co-curricular leadership roles revealed more positive attitudes about careers and enhanced abilities to look ahead when making career choices.

Mouritsen and Quick (1987) suggested a leadership curriculum based on the use of ecological and developmental theory and explained how a student leadership class can have a significant impact on the ethical development of students.

Grace (1996) examined ethical leadership training as a part of the education of today's students, the leaders of the future. Students should be trained in group processing and facilitating skills, oral and written communication, conflict management, shared decision making, and team management. The program imparted a sense of vision through campus and community leadership experiences. The ability to communicate and accomplish goals, or the "voice" element, was taught through exercises developing both interpersonal and intergroup communication skills, and utilized mentoring and role-models to help student development. Finally, the program taught about virtue, or the commitment to the common good, by providing students with the sense that society needed their input and that this input must be intertwined with an established value system.

Ritter and Brown (1986) described a model for constructing a student leadership development program at the college level and suggestions for refining an existing leadership program. Stanford (1992) examined significant positive relationships that exist between organizational and non-organizational extracurricular involvement and areas of student development (establishing and clarifying purpose, developing mature interpersonal relationships, academic autonomy) among campus leaders and found significant positive relationships between organizational and non organizational involvement and particular areas of development. Breeze-Mead (1991) reviewed competencies among student leaders' and found actions derived from personal values, beliefs, skills, and goals. Leaders needed to know themselves well and act consistently with regard to their value systems to earn followers' trust.

Key (1996) focussed on the relationship of involvement in college student leadership and developmental tasks of: (a) academic autonomy (the responsibility for setting and achieving one's educational goals); (b) purpose (establishing and clarifying one's direction in life as it relates to a growing awareness of personal identity); and (c)

maturing interpersonal relationships (increasing one's skills and commitment to interdependence, intimacy, and the genuine appreciation of others). The study concluded that: (a) over the short period of voluntary participation in student leadership groups, there has appeared to be relatively little development in the manifestation of a sense of purpose, maturing interpersonal relationships, and academic autonomy, and (b) non-student leaders revealed limited evidence that they may show slightly greater development in sense of purpose than that revealed by student leaders over the same time period.

Benefits of student leadership focussed on the attractiveness of the leadership experience to future career goals, development of life skills, and development of leadership skills. In addition, the student leadership experience was also associated with the choice of future career goals as well as overall student development. Real and perceived benefits of student leadership focussed on its contribution to leadership behaviour.

Student Leadership and Learning

Research involving the relationship between student leadership and learning was examined. Hutchison, Kirkhorn, Shmikler, Newell, and Wills (1988) listed skills identified by the Leadership Development Task Force as being critical skills for a leader. Discussion focussed on information managing skills, including problem solving, decision making, setting goals and objectives; project management; and people managing skills, including interpersonal communications, conflict management, motivation, and mentoring. Heifetz and Laurie (1997) described changes in societies, markets, customers, competition, and technology forcing organizations to clarify their values, develop new strategies, and learn new ways of operating. Adaptive demands of contemporary life required leaders who take responsibility without waiting for revelation or request.

Walters and Wilmoth (1989) used The Leadership Opinion Questionnaire, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, and a demographic questionnaire and found strong variates relating leadership attributes to personality preferences. Porter (1981) suggested leadership training be provided for students in preparation for assuming leadership

responsibilities. Seitz and Pepitone (1996) proposed a leadership program aimed at service to others and proposed a leadership of persuasion. Wynne (1984) suggested a structure for teaching children and adolescents how to practice leadership. The nearest courses to conscious leadership training were programs for the"gifted" in secondary and elementary schools. Leadership was seen as a learned talent.

Baugh (1981) identified characteristics of student leaders perceived to be most important by teachers and students. Results revealed that the five most frequently selected characteristics by teachers were: gets along with others, dependable, ability to influence, fair, and kind. The five most frequently selected characteristics by students were: gets along with others, fair, dependable, good listener, and good judgment. The findings also provided an indicator to three areas upon which programs designed to develop leadership might be based. Such areas included: interpersonal skills, personal skills, and organizational or management sills, such as problem-solving and decision-making. Findings further suggested the need for greater emphasis on the kinds of programs which provide opportunities for greater interaction, increased cooperation, and experiences in which students have an opportunity to develop skills in making judgments (decisions), listening and effective communication.

Monahan and Smith (1991) provided some important conclusions and recommendations that may be drawn by comparing U.S. Army leadership processes to the state-of-the-art in educational administration: (a) army leadership development works in the ways intended; (b) leadership must be learned, not taught; and (c) everybody involved must truly participate. Schoening and Keane (1989) described Wenatchee Valley College's (WVC's) student leadership development program and its success in identifying and developing people to perform leadership roles within the campus community. Mouritsen and Quick (1987) addressed the design and outcomes of Foundations of Leadership Development, a new leadership development program at Brigham Young University and described the program from a broad-based, theoretical point of view using ecological and developmental theory and explained how a student leadership class can have a significant impact on the ethical development of students. Bradley and Brown

(1989) discussed organizational growth in student government, Greek-affiliated organizations, and activities councils through the use of properly planned student leadership training programs.

Roberts and Ullom (1989) described the Inter-Association Leadership Project's model for conceptualizing and designing a comprehensive college student leadership program and outlined implementation considerations and curriculum topics. Grant (1994) outlined a student leadership program developed to create a supportive environment in which students could learn about their leadership styles, gain confidence about themselves in leadership roles, and apply learning to future activities/responsibilities. Barsi, Hand, and Kress (1985) discussed techniques, procedures, and a model for an effective leadership training program for college students with an emphasis on recognizing personal traits, student training, and involvement as keys to developing a successful program.

Allen (1990) challenged background assumptions about ways of teaching leadership to college students. Emerging beliefs were that leadership would be practised in a dynamic and constantly changing system. What may be important was the inner-development of values, ethics, world views, and beliefs of the potential leader. Fisher and Sartorelli (1992) proposed a model for college student leadership training, based on an emergent paradigm, accommodating the diversity of both traditional and nontraditional student populations while meeting various student needs. The model was built on involvement, sense of belonging, and self-esteem. McIntire (1989) advocated the development of a strong college student leadership program and described important components of such a program and the leadership role student affairs professionals should take in its implementation. Buckner and Williams (1995) addressed leadership training programs for college students using a theoretical model of organizational effectiveness and leadership which was adapted and applied to student leadership programs.

Yamasaki (1995) examined the gap between Asian American over-representation in higher education and their under-representation in leadership positions in United States society and leadership in a Japanese American college student organization, the "Tomo

No Kai (Tomo)." In particular the study reviewed the role of personal qualities, cultural values, and generational status in students' conceptions and practice of leadership. Hughs (1987) described twenty-four characteristics of effective leaders as an aid in helping others become effective student activities directors. It was stated that leaders were made, not born; leadership must be learned from experience, not from a textbook; and one must build on successes and learn from mistakes. Among characteristics of effective leaders were: motivation; innovation; creativity; discipline; tact; compromise; flexibility; charisma; sympathy/empathy; confidentiality; sense of humour; and possession of good communication, conflict mediation, and human relations skills.

DiMattia (1990) discussed two papers on leadership and information professionals and outlined seven steps for personal/career planning: (a) background; (b) strengths and weaknesses; (c) environment; (d) options; (e) selection; (f) action plan; and (g) evaluation. Tack (1991) proposed that higher education's future leaders must have clear values, focus on quality, be willing and able to take calculated risks, balance demands of professional and personal life, balance participation and input against delegation of authority, be motivational specialists, and use time in decision making more carefully than ever. Arminio (1993) used theories of cognitive, racial identity, affective, psychological, and moral development to design college student leadership training programs.

Grant (1984) described Growth Opportunities in Leadership Development (G.O.L.D.), a student leadership program developed to create a supportive environment in which students could learn about their leadership styles, gain confidence about themselves in leadership roles, and apply learning to future activities/responsibilities. Fisher and Sartorelli (1992) proposed a model for college student leadership training based on an emergent paradigm and accommodated the diversity of both traditional and nontraditional student populations while meeting various student needs. The model was built around involvement, sense of belonging, and self-esteem and could also be applied in the planning of other programs. Roberts and Ullom (1989) described the Inter-Association Leadership Project's model for conceptualizing and designing a

comprehensive college student leadership program.

Varied learning associated with leadership identified skill development, preparations for assuming leadership responsibilities, necessary communication techniques, as well as the development of ethics, values, and beliefs. College student leadership programs are numerous and serve to highlight the importance of providing a conducive training environment to inculcate desired leadership behaviour.

Student Leadership and Campus Influence

Several studies examined the influence of student leadership on campus. Newton (1976) recognized the need for student leadership within the university community. Leatt (1988) aimed to develop a theory about what takes place when formal and informal student leaders participate in student government and showed that student leaders were predominantly middle class, and that they belonged almost exclusively to the popular, smart, or sporting groups in their schools. Student leadership programs typically focussed on production goals, (e.g., service projects, instruction goals, and leadership training). Student council advisors often did not hold the same perception of student leadership that formal student leaders held, and the latter did not always hold the same perception that their informal counterparts hold. Most student leaders believed, however, that administrators and teachers presented a definite obstacle to student leadership. In particular, student leaders were frequently excluded from problem solving and decision making in schools.

Silien (1992) examined new concepts and developments in student leadership theory, research, and practice in higher education, focussing on such issues as a shifting of cultural and gender issues surrounding leadership, rapidly changing demographics, assessment of leadership development, and community building. Clerc and Debbasch (1972) outlined the rationale for student participation in university governance. Alexander (1969) provided a different perspective on student government within larger universities. Gordon (1975) examined student empowerment as dependent on a whole-group effort.

Chambers and Phelps (1993) explored the notion that student activism is a form

of leadership and development and raised issues regarding student activism that challenges educators to view the developmental potential of militant behaviour and thought. Rice (1971) compared activists and establishment student leaders in terms of characteristics and demographic information and found activists significantly more likely to be older, achieve higher grades, espouse a nonreligious orientation, and have a working mother. Nussbaum, Cordero, and Hake (1990) described three proposals for encouraging student participation in the governance of California's community colleges and for establishing a minimum standard regulation for local procedures. Measures were intended to improve and enhance access to governance mechanisms, improve accountability, enhance the quality and effectiveness of representation, and improve communication and coordination.

Taylor (1973) examined ways of using student talent in areas of student governance, athletic and housing problems, and activities including an internship program, contract research, work-study programs, and consulting services. Ryavec (1974) recommended that universities allow students to take responsibility for themselves, they respond effectively to all student concerns, and they establish paid positions for elected students within the administration.

Whitt (1994) studied three women's colleges to determine how they accomplish their goals of women's education and how they influence their students. Findings demonstrated the need for attention to context for leadership development; affirmative opportunities for women to develop and practice leadership skills; and environmental assessment. Cedillos (1984) examined organizational factors which influenced Chicano students formally participating in a university's ethnic student government. Major findings of this study arose from the two areas of critical information shortages. Concerning the organizational structure of leadership training environments, results indicated that student government functioned in a dualistic governance context of university administration and university collegial norms and faculty organization on the other. Ryan (1994) noted that institutions of higher education have been unable or unwilling to make constructive and consistent use of student leadership as an advocate for

institutions. She noted that student leaders are calling for a strong student advocacy role to reverse the decline of funding.

In one of the few Canadian studies, Schiralli and Williams (1993) surveyed university student leaders on the prevalence of 20 campus life issues and found student preoccupation with future career, student apathy, low interest in broad intellectual concerns, close-mindedness, and alcohol abuse. In a related study in the United States, Keppler and Robinson (1993) had student leaders identify and rank 49 salient issues in student government in six categories: finance, quality of student life, structure, relationships, representation, and social issues.

Rost and Cosgrove (1987) suggested that political skill is critical to the success of any leader, and the political dimension of leadership can no longer be omitted from students' training. An understanding of politics and the ability to use political strategy are critical dimensions of leadership. Wyatt and Stoner (1984) presented a white paper on residence hall government, summarizing fundamental principles in organizing and maintaining a residence hall association on campus including determining needs, identifying support, obtaining income, ensuring effective leadership, and developing system maintenance.

Covington (1986) compared perceptions of student government leaders and their advisors concerning selected aspects of student government in Florida's 9 state universities and 28 community colleges. Results indicated statistically significant differences between student government leaders and advisors in universities in the perceptions about the educational value of student government.

While research supports the inclusion of student leaders in campus governance activities and the importance of student activism, there appears to be no general agreement on the process and the exact role student leaders are expected to play. Student representation and student advocacy appear as common activities, while student leaders are also called upon to deal with various problems on campus, improve communication, and coordination with university officials. Researchers support student government as an effective mechanism to learn about the politics of government and to make use of the

political process as part of governance strategies on campus.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework (Figure 2.1) guiding this study was finalized after a complete review of the relevant literature. Past experiences and campus influences affect leadership behaviour. While these experiences may be varied, it is unclear which might be most influential and how these activities guide the conduct of students in leadership situations. The literature suggests a linear relationship of these two important factors on leadership behaviour.

While there may be many benefits associated with leadership and much learning occurring, it is uncertain which are key benefits associated with leadership involvement as well as the learning which takes place. Previous research also does not indicate possible effects of benefits and learning on present leadership behaviour. These latter factors appear to have little influence and are a result of leadership involvement. More importantly, the literature does not suggest a possible interrelationship existing among past experiences, campus influences, benefits associated from such experiences, and learning derived from past involvement on present leadership behaviour.

Based on the review of literature, the conceptual framework presented (Figure 2.1) guided the initial research but was modified based on relevant findings.

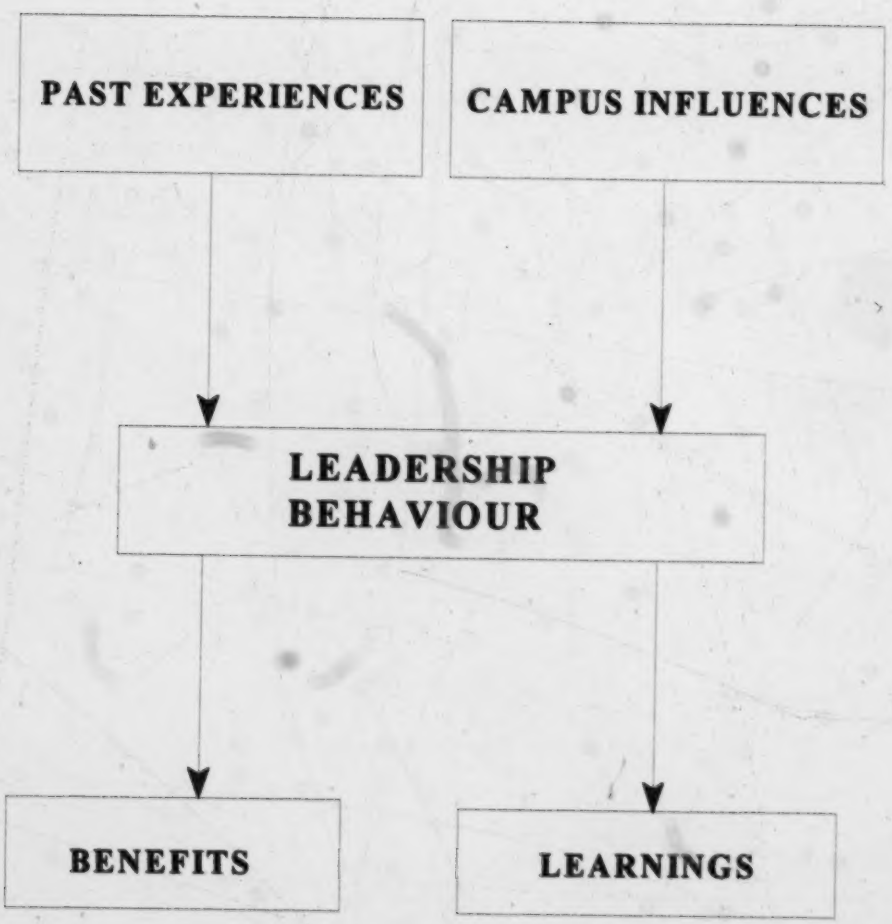

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework for Study

Summary

The review of relevant literature examined student involvement in co-curricular activities, leadership, and leadership behaviour from its broadest perspectives before focussing on student leadership on a university campus. Among areas of interest perceived as possible influences to leadership behaviour and guiding the study were: (a) past experiences including past leadership experiences as well as the influence of community, school, sports, and university experiences such as residences and fraternities; (b) student leadership behaviour including meeting behaviour and role modelling; (c) benefits of leadership associated with the acquisition of skills and development of leadership abilities; (d) significant learning including skill development and personal development; and (e) campus influences and the role of student leadership such as campus governance, student representation, and advocacy.

The interaction of different influences such as past and present experiences provided significant learning and benefits to student leaders and helped in identifying and developing appropriate leadership behaviour. Such influences also guided the development of the conceptual framework used in the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

This chapter presents the research method taken for the study as well as the rationale for utilizing this approach with relevant references from the literature. The following sections are included in this chapter: (a) the respondent group involved in the study, (b) the research method used, (c) the justification for the selected approach, (d) the research design including a description of the three data collection procedures used, (e) the time line for the study, (f) a description of the pilot study, (g) description of the data analysis with explanation of the trustworthiness along with validity and reliability concerns, and (h) ethical considerations involved.

The Respondent Group

The respondent group for this study was selected among student leaders at the University of Alberta. Although there are over two hundred different student groups on campus, a selected number represent the interests of specific student groups. The five organizations selected to take part in the study provided representation from a large segment of student leaders. Each group represented a large proportion of the student population on campus. In addition, the representation spanned various age groups, varying levels of seniority, many degrees of educational experiences, different levels of representation of the student community, and varying levels of leadership experiences, both at the University of Alberta and other institutions.

Participants in this study had been student leaders for a least a year and were presently holding a senior leadership position within their student organization or committee. All participants had either been elected during formally recognized elections in the previous year or had been selected to represent the interests of their specific student community. All participants volunteered to be part of the study.

Research Method

To gain an understanding of the influence of past experiences on student leadership behaviour, the naturalistic inquiry focussed on stories and experiences of student leaders.

Guba and Lincoln (1982) suggested several axioms to explain a naturalistic examination as the approach in this type of study.

A basic concern in conducting this research was the focus on the lives of the student leaders. Such a study explored student leaders and their understanding of leadership from a student leader's perspective. A naturalistic inquiry facilitated incorporation of multiple viewpoints in describing the participants' experiences.

In a naturalistic study, explanation of cause focuses on multiple events and interactions. The complex lives of student leaders included: interactions with other student leaders, events within an institutional community, and context of economic and political times. Events guide and shape actions of student leaders and an interplay of events must be considered.

Although no single definition exists for the naturalistic approach used, Spradley (1980) linked such an procedure with explaining of cultural knowledge, Gumprez (1981) with detailing of social interactions, and Lutz (1981) with describing whole societies. A naturalistic inquiry allows student leaders to tell stories, describe experiences, and explain situations.

I also took an interpretist approach to data analysis and examined student leaders as students who chose to involve themselves in the campus community. I developed, with the help of the participants, an understanding of perceptions of leadership and leadership effectiveness. Explanations took the shape of a web, with each observation and each interview adding to the knowledge. Similarities emerged from the data as more and more information was shared. However, each student leader also had a different story to tell; different yet rich in blending of experiences as student leaders, as students, and as individuals. Each experience was unique and was captured during observations, personal, and group interviews. There are no strict rules in this method of data collection. I ensured that each participant felt comfortable telling their story and trusted me to share their experience.

Justification for the Selected Approach

Certain distinguishing features (Werner & Schoepfle, 1987) relate to a naturalistic inquiry. First, I used the holistic versus the particularistic approach in the study. The holistic procedure enabled an overview of student leaders. A total picture was desired beyond specific roles of student government and institutional governance. Second, I presented sketches versus full descriptions. Limitations of time and involvement enabled only sketches of student leaders. However, various data collection strategies were planned and information allowed for a "thick" description. Third, I chose the synthetic versus the analytic form of data analysis. An interrelatedness of responsibilities described student leaders and their involvement in an institutional community. A naturalistic approach examined an interrelationship and synthesis of roles into an understanding of student leaders. Fourth, I decided on the use of reportage versus fiction. The study was an account of student leaders within an institutional milieu and provided an understanding of the influence of a student's experiences in leadership. Fifth, I decided on multiple themes versus a single one. The study examined many themes. Justice to student leaders would not be served if only one topic had been considered. Through various data collection procedures, many points emerged and all possibilities were considered in a thorough description of student leaders and past influences on leadership behaviour. Sixth, the study was based on implicit versus explicit theory or more clearly understood as grounded theory. The study was based on understanding student leaders on a university campus. Little information was available about student leaders and involvement in postsecondary education. The study did not build on previous theoretical constructs but gave student leaders an opportunity to share stories and experiences.

In the analysis, Werner and Schoepfle (1987) also suggested four dimensions to consider: social, spatial, knowledge, and temporal (pp. 56-57). The social dimension focussed on the primary group; that of student leaders. However, within this group were subgroups worth exploring. Student leaders within the executive committees of the Students' Union, Graduates Students' Association, in residences, and fraternities. Subgroups provided additional perspectives of student leaders' and various experiences

brought to leadership. The spatial dimension described the environment in which student leaders worked and lived. Meetings and interactions with colleagues provided one perspective. However, student leaders were also seen as students, members of the university community, and participants in institutional governance. Various settings allowed for a better understanding of student leaders and experiences influencing leadership behaviour. The knowledge dimension highlighted an overall perspective of student leaders. A holistic view was pursued in order to better understand responsibilities, frustrations, problems, and concerns of student leaders. The temporal dimension provided a view of student leaders over the course of one academic semester. While limitations were evident, a four-month (September to December) examination, of various student affiliations, in different environments, allowed for a comprehensive view of student leaders.

Research Design

Twenty-one students in formal leadership positions took part in the study. These students were members of executive committees of five recognized student groups and were elected prior to the 1996-1997 academic year. The five formal student leadership organizations were as follows: the Students' Union, the student government association representing all undergraduate students at the University of Alberta; the Graduate Students' Association with similar responsibilities for graduate students at the University; the Housing and Residents' Committee, student leaders living in residences and representing other students living in residences at the University of Alberta; the Interfraternity Council, an organization representing men's fraternities at the University of Alberta; and the Panhellenic Council, a similar organization representing women's fraternities.

Three procedures for data collection were chosen: personal interviews, observations of meetings of each committee, and group interviews of each committee. Three techniques were chosen as they were "likely to (1) elicit data needed to gain understanding of the phenomenon in question, (2) contribute different perspectives on the issue, and (3) make effective use of time available for data collection" (Glesne & Peshkin,

1992, p. 24).

Personal Interviews

Personal interviews comprised the initial data collection and presented opportunities for student leaders to share experiences. Representation from various student groups was sought: Students' Union, Graduate Students' Association, Housing and Residents' Committee, Interfraternity Council, and the Panhellenic Council. Student leaders were of varying ages and degrees of experience, both as students and as student leaders. A semi-structured interview schedule was used with certain questions prepared in advance and used to guide the interview. However, other questions were interjected and allowed participants to share more specific experiences and identify issues.

Personal interviews were scheduled during the first four months of the academic year. Most student leaders had been in their positions for at least one month however, the majority had assumed their positions in early May, at least five months prior to taking part in personal interviews. Once participants had been identified, phone calls to each individual enabled a mutually convenient time to be scheduled. Once a time had been established, participants were diligent in attending and being interviewed. Only once did an interview have to be rescheduled due to a transportation problem.

Personal interviews varied in duration from 45 to 90 minutes and took place in a setting most comfortable to the participant. On five occasions, interviews were conducted in a location determined by the interviewer. Prior to the interview, participants were explained the purpose of the study and the reason for the interview. Participants were told interviews would be recorded and transcripts would be sent to them, giving them an opportunity to review their responses, make corrections, and return the transcripts. Once satisfied that the transcripts accurately reflected their responses, they were told to keep their written account for their own records or discard them. Participants were also told they could pass on any question or opt out at any point during the interview. None of the participants chose to opt out.

Personal interviews comprised several questions pertaining to their past experiences and past leadership activities. Experiences deemed influential in determining

future involvement in leadership were also identified. Several questions focussed on present leadership activity, influences, skills learned, and overall influence of student leadership on a university community. Finally, participants were also asked to share insights for others contemplating future involvement in student leadership and benefits derived from their involvement.

Tape recordings of the interviews were then given to a transcriber. These were returned to me along with a hard copy transcript and a disk copy.

Observations

Observation of meetings provided another insight into the lives of student leaders. Such sessions paid attention to activities of student leaders and facilitated an initial understanding of issues and problems. Observations enabled "to understand the research setting, its participants, and their behavior" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 42). Werner and Schoepfle (1987) suggested systematic observation which included: descriptive observation or general observation of everything, focussed observation which allowed a focus on particular events, roles, or activities, and selective observation which enabled an observation of attributes of a given activity.

Five regularly scheduled meetings in which participants of the study and other members of the various committees were observed. Meetings were approximately one hour in duration and participants were observed interacting with other members of the committee, presenting reports, and debating issues. Although only a few meetings had formal agendas, all meetings had a systematic flow to their proceedings. All meetings were serious in nature although there were lighthearted moments throughout as well as polite bantering on occasion. Notes of each meeting were taken and then transcribed.

Group Interviews

Another type of interview allowed members of each student organization to come together and share feelings, thoughts, reactions, and overall impressions of student leadership. Group interviews were used to gain perspectives not already identified through observations or shared through personal interviews. Although Werner and Schoepfle (1987) referred to the process as "gang interviewing" and suggested that it only

be used to clarify fine points, Lancy (1993) supported group interviews as they allowed respondents to be in a more natural setting than personal interviews. Representatives from each formal student organization involved in the study were brought together for group interviews. Issues identified during observation sessions and personal interviews were revisited. Such a variation of a traditional interview revealed information about student leaders that personal interviews were unable to provide.

Initially, a focus group session had been identified as the group interview technique. The focus group would bring together a representative from each of the five groups to discuss issues around their role as student leaders and concerns surrounding student leadership in a forum which enabled some interaction among participants. However, for the sake of gathering a greater amount of information and put respondents in the most comfortable situation possible, a decision was made to interview the five student organizations separately, in their own environment, following one of their regularly scheduled meetings. This change in approach enabled participants from personal interviews to be in a more natural setting and allowed others who had not been part of the personal interview process to also provide insights into student leadership. The approach proved to be easier in terms of scheduling and put participants at ease as they mingled with their friends and colleagues, thus allowing much information to be gathered.

Group interviews were scheduled following regularly scheduled meetings of each student organizations in which the observation session had taken place. Attendance at these sessions was voluntary as some members of each organization did not have the time or the interest to be interviewed with their colleagues. Prior to the group interview, participants were told the purpose of the group interview and that their involvement was voluntary. At any time, individual participants could choose not to respond to a particular question. Several questions were prepared to initiate and facilitate discussion. Questions were of two general categories: specific questions regarding their student organization and general questions pertaining to student leadership. However, participants were free to add to anyone else's responses or interject insights deemed useful to the interview.

The duration of group interviews was approximately 35 minutes. All sessions were recorded and hard copy transcripts were produced.

For the purposes of reporting, transcripts were edited. However, I ensured the essential meaning of students' accounts was retained.

Time line

During the summer months and early September 1996, introductory letters were sent to the presidents of the five student organizations explaining the purpose of the research and requesting their participation in the study. Each group was asked to identify four members of their committee or executive committee who would take part in the study. The presidents were also asked permission for the researcher to attend a meeting of their committee as well as interview committee members following each meeting.

Personal interviews were scheduled during September through November of the 1996-1997 academic year. The time chosen allowed student leaders to have gained some experience in their present leadership setting and enabled them to offer insights which could only gained from these experiences. Most of the student leaders, although elected or selected at the end of the previous academic year, had only officially assumed their duties in September. Observation of meetings followed personal interviews. After finalizing meeting times with the president of the five student organizations, I remained in the background while the formal meeting was being conducted. Notes were made throughout the meeting although I ensured to remain inconspicious.

Group interviews were scheduled during the latter part of November and early December following a regularly scheduled meeting of each committee. Participation in the group interview was voluntary and participants were asked to group together in order to facilitate tape recording of responses. A semi-structured format was used for the group interview as well.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted during the summer and early fall of 1996 to examine the role of the researcher during data collection. Four student leaders, one from the Students' Union, the Graduate Students' Association, the Housing and Residents'

Committee, and the Interfraternity Council were interviewed separately in order to gain insights into responses, clarity of questions, reactions to questions, and overall impressions of the interview process. The pilot study enabled the development of skills required during interviews and assisted in refining techniques necessary for formal data gathering. Following each interview, a debriefing session ascertained reactions to questions, responses received, perceptions of responses, and general reactions to the interview process. Participants were interviewed using the planned approach and questions related to past experiences, present leadership activity, and the future of student leadership. Participants were also asked to include whatever insights or thoughts were relevant to the questions posed. Appendix A provides a final list of questions posed during personal interviews. Participants were also asked about their comfort level during the interview and what might be done during the session to create a relaxing environment for student leaders that would be conducive to thoughtful responses. I also used the opportunity to ask about interview technique and what could be done to facilitate the process. Participant responses during the pilot study were incorporated into the results.

Data Analysis

Responses of the participants during personal interviews, observations of meetings, and group interviews were analysed based on content and types of responses to questions posed and observations made. Although tabulations of responses were not made, common responses enabled certain general themes to emerge which formed the basis of the study report. In addition, insightful comments made but not related to specific questions posed were also retained and analysed. General themes emerged using both deductive and inductive analysis of the data.

Trustworthiness of the Study

In the rationalistic paradigm, the questions of internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity are addressed. However, Guba and Lincoln (1982) discussed trustworthiness within the naturalistic paradigm with reference to the following terms: "credibility (internal validity), transferability (external validity), dependability (reliability), and confirmability (objectivity)" (p. 246).

Credibility (internal validity) refers to accuracy of data collected with data required for the study and is demonstrated through stories and experiences of student leaders. Twenty-one different student leaders were interviewed, five separate student meetings were observed, and five group interviews were conducted. Each participant had a different experience to share as a student leader. Guba and Lincoln (1982) noted:

> naturalists do have at least indirect access to the multiple realities they deal with: since these realities are in the minds of people (as idiosyncratic constructions that vary from individual to individual), naturalists can ask those people whether their realities have been represented appropriately (p. 246).

In this study, safeguards to credibility included: peer debriefing of participants in the study; triangulation using personal interviews, group interviews, and observations; and member checks as data collected was verified with other members of other student groups (p. 247).

Transferability (external validity) examines applicability of results to other contexts. In a naturalistic inquiry, transferability is explained through interrelatedness of human interactions within a similar context. In a naturalistic inquiry, ". . . some degree of transferability is possible under certain circumstances" (Guba & Lincoln, 1982, p. 247), particularly if the study allows for "purposive sampling" (p. 247), which encourages a wide range of information collected, and "thick description" (p. 248) as it relates to context of the study. Within the community of student leaders at this postsecondary institution and elsewhere, some degree of transferability is expected. Purposive sampling whereby members from five different student groups were involved in the study and thick description as detailed in Chapter 4 were safeguards to transferability.

Dependability (reliability) refers to replicability of the study under similar circumstances. Dependability is demonstrated through various research methods. Personal interviews with student leaders, observation sessions, and group interviews provided substantial information. Data gathered during sessions enabled student leaders to tell many stories and explain various influences on leadership behaviour. Safeguards to dependability included: use of overlap methods (personal and group interviews) and a dependability audit which ensured an audit trail was recorded (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.

248). Although an audit trail was documented, no audit trail was followed in this study.

Finally, with respect to confirmability (objectivity), which refers to "intersubjective agreement" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 247), three data collection strategies allowed much information to be gained from student leaders. Triangulation facilitated cross checking of data. In addition, through these procedures, Winter (1989) recommended the exercise of reflexivity which "enables us, firstly, to question the claim of any statement simply to label a factual state of affairs [without, of course, involving any claim that the statement is 'wrong']. And secondly it enables us to question any claim of generality, by noting the string of particular assumptions and judgments on which any interpretation must always depend" (pp. 43-44). A confirmability audit (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 248) would have allowed appropriate tracing of data "back through analysis steps to original data, and that interpretation of data clusters are reasonable and meaningful,. . ." (p.248). No confirmability audit was done for this study.

Past professional involvement with student leaders over the last nine years have created certain personal biases which could have affected the study. While not totally immune, I was careful not to have these preconceptions shape questions used during personal and group interviews as well as affect observations of meetings. I was aware of the possible effect of certain past experiences particularly surrounding previous leadership activities associated with school and sports in shaping leadership behaviour. I was also familiar with the potential influences on campus and their effects on leadership involvement. Through my own experiences as well as information provided by former student leaders in residence, I was cognizant of the effect of key individuals in home communities as well as important individuals within the campus community. I was also aware of possible benefits and learning associated with leadership involvement such as skill development, interpersonal relationships, potential benefits to future career endeavours, and overall satisfaction derived from leadership activities. I knew role modelling was a key component of leadership behaviour. Yet, I avoided having these biases influence interviews or observations.

Ethical Considerations

No ethical problems arose from the study. Participation from student leaders was voluntary. Participants were instructed that withdrawal was permitted at any time as well as an option to pass on any question. Group interviews placed less emphasis on one person to answer as other colleagues were also involved. Semi-structured interviews enabled participants to control details provided. Information shared posed no psychological harm to participants and anonymity of student leaders was safeguarded at all times. All responses remained confidential.

In accordance with the policy of the University of Alberta, the research proposal was submitted for review and approval to the Ethics Review Committee of the Department of Educational Policy Studies.

Summary

This chapter defined the population of the study and the research method used to gain the necessary data and deal with specific research questions. The population consisted of student leaders from student organizations at the University of Alberta. A pilot study was scheduled prior to data collection in order to create and modify a question list as well as improve interview and observation techniques. Personal interviews of 21 student leaders, observation of five committee meetings, and five group interviews formed the basis of the data collection procedures. Content analysis techniques were used to identify emerging themes from the information gathered during the interviews and observation sessions. Trustworthiness within the naturalistic paradigm in terms of credibility was safeguarded using peer debriefing, triangulation, and member checks; in terms of transferability using thick description and purposive sampling. Although recorded as part of the data collection process, no audit trail was followed or confirmability audit done in this study.

CHAPTER 4

DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS

This chapter provides an overview of the institution and participants involved in the study. A brief description of student representation at the University of Alberta is also included. Five student groups involved in the research are described and their respective roles on campus delineated.

University of Alberta

The University of Alberta is located in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada and is a publicly supported, non-denominational, co-educational institution. In addition to its main campus spread over 89 hectares and bordering on the southern banks of the North Saskatchewan River, the University Farm occupies 148 hectares including a married student residence, with additional properties such as the botanical gardens in Devon and lands near Fort Assiniboine.

The main campus includes numerous teaching and research facilities, two affiliated colleges, four student residences, the Students' Union, and several service buildings. In addition, on lands south of 87th Avenue, are several research health facilities, two teaching hospitals, and the Northern Alberta Jubilee Auditorium. A smaller campus, Faculté St-Jean, on 91st Street offers undergraduate and graduate programs in French. A small residence is also located on this campus.

The University was first established in 1906 following an act passed by the legislature and offered its first classes in 1908. Alexander Cameron Rutherford, the province's first Premier and its first Minister of Education, purchased the site for the main campus in what was then known as Strathcona. Henry Marshall Tory became the University's first President, holding the office from 1908 to 1928. The Senate, the acting governing body of the University at the time, established the Faculty of Arts and Science. In 1910, with a revision of the University Act, the Board of Governors was established as the main administrative and management body of the institution.

Its first classes were offered at the Duggan Street School, later known as the Queen Alexandria School, then moved to the upper floor of the Strathcona Collegiate

Institute and finally in 1911 to Athabasca Hall. Athabasca Hall held classrooms, laboratories and a library, served as residence for students and staff, had a gymnasium, and administrative offices. Shortly thereafter, Assiniboia Hall was completed in 1913, and then Pembina Hall in 1914. The Students' Union was established during the first session, the Gateway, the student newspaper circulated its first issue in 1911, and the first joint committee of students and University Officials, the Committee on Student Affairs, was established in 1912.

During the years 1914 to 1945, the growth of the institution was steady but slow. Various faculties were established although building of additional facilities was curbed by war and financial cutbacks. Some growth occurred after the First World War, the Depression and World War II saw only a moderate increase in enrollment, staffing, and buildings. The University became affiliated with other institutions in the province such as Mount Royal College in Calgary in 1931 and the Banff School of Fine Arts in 1933. The impact of the Second World War, although noticeable, was lessened due to the province's commitment to the University and the use of many of its facilities by various agencies of the federal government to aid in the war effort.

Following the war and the flood of veterans to the University, enrollment increased dramatically as did the addition of space for classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and residences. Although moderated somewhat in the 1950s, the early '60s saw a proliferation of new buildings, expansion of existing buildings, new residences and dining facilities, and new libraries. The Faculty of Graduate Studies was established in 1957 following the growth in number and complexity of disciplines. As the University's work around the province increased, new affiliations with colleges in Lethbridge, Camrose, Medicine Hat, Red Deer, and Grande Prairie were established.

In 1966, The Universities Act provided major revision to university legislation and established the University of Calgary including the Banff School of Fine Arts and allowed for the creation of other autonomous universities. The Act also decentralised university administration and allowed the creation of separate universities in Calgary (1966) as well as Lethbridge (1967).

Although enrollments continued to climb in the 1970s and 1980s, monies required for renovating older facilities, and building new ones became less and less available. Government funding for postsecondary education was also declining. Several faculties and departments were merged and administrative costs were streamlined. More cost efficient ways in administrating university facilities and managing university programs and services were being considered. Presently, the University grants undergraduate, master's and doctorate degrees in over 104 different disciplines. The current enrollment is approximately 30,000 full-time and part-time students.

Key University officials include the Chancellor who is the elected, titular head of the University, represents its interests outside the University, chairs the Senate, is an ex-officio member of the Board of Governors; the President and Vice-Chancellor, an ex-officio member of the Universities Coordinating Council, Senate, Board of Governors, and all faculty councils as well as chairing meetings of the General Faculties Council and the Deans' Council; the Vice-Presidents (Academic, Finance and Administration, and Research and External Affairs); the Board of Governors; the Senate; the General Faculties Council; Deans' Council; and Faculty Councils (Berghofer & Vladicka, 1980; University Calendar, 1997).

Student Representation

Student representation exists at all levels of the University governance structure with the exception of the Universities Coordinating Council and Deans' Council. There are three representatives on the Board of Governors, five representatives appointed by the Students' Union and the Graduate Students' Association to the University Senate, and three representatives appointed by the Students' Union and the Graduate Students' Association on the General Faculties Council. Faculty Councils normally have at least one student representative.

The Graduate Students' Association and the Students' Union make up two of the larger student groups on campus and look after the interests of all full-time and part-time students. In addition, both groups provide a range of services for their constituent group, employ a large number of part-time student staff, and have full-time administrators to

deal with student concerns. Each is located in separate facilities on campus. Revenues to support their many activities and services come from student fees assessed to each full-time and part-time student, as well as a myriad of revenue-generating activities including bookstore, alcohol sales, games room, and food outlets.

Three other groups represented in the study focus on very specific student populations at the University. The Housing and Residents' Committee, a sub-committee of the Students' Union, is formed of representatives from each university residence as well as selected members of the Students' Union and administrators for the University. The Interfraternity Council serves the interests of the men's fraternities at the University of Alberta and acts as liaison among men's fraternities, the University, the Students' Union, the Garneau Community and Campus Security (Internet info, 1997). The Panhellenic Council fulfills a similar mandate with women's fraternities at the University of Alberta.

All participants were students at the University of Alberta and involved in leadership activities with a recognized student organization on campus. An overall description of the participants is provided. The chapter also includes a description of each of the student organizations. The five student groups represented a cross section of student leaders making up the student community at the University of Alberta during the 1996-1997 academic year. Each association is recognized as representing either, formally or informally, five segments of the student population. A formal request was made to the executive committee of each organization to take part in the study. Participants were then selected within the executive of their respective organization and names and phone numbers were obtained so that a convenient interview time could be scheduled with each participant. Observation of each student organization executive meeting and group interviews with each of the respective executive committee were scheduled to coincide with regular bi-weekly or monthly meetings. I attended one meeting of each of the five student groups involved in the study.

Graduate Students' Association

The Graduate Students' Association (GSA) is the umbrella association representing students involved in graduate studies at the University of Alberta. The GSA executive committee is made up of a President, an Executive Vice-President, four Vice-Presidents, along with two office staff who look after the day-to-day activities of the association and tend to the needs of its constituency. It is one of the larger student organizations on campus with membership in excess of 4,000 students. The GSA holds elections annually with a new slate of representatives making up the executive committee of the association and taking office at the end of the academic year (April). The offices of the GSA are located in the North Power Plant building and have regular business hours to deal with the activities of its elected officers as well as provide a variety of services to its membership. Services offered by the GSA include photocopying at a reduced rate and a dental plan. The GSA represents graduate students on all senior university-wide committees such as the Board of Governors, the Senate, General Faculties Council and faculty committees as well as a number of other committees where interests of graduate students are at stake. Executive members express the views and concerns of the graduate student population on those committees and provide reports to the Executive as well as the graduate student community at regular scheduled meetings of the GSA membership.

Students' Union

The Students' Union (SU) is the largest student organization on campus and represents the interests of all undergraduate students at the University of Alberta, a number in excess of 26,000 students. The executive committee of the association is composed of the President and four Vice-Presidents elected annually and begin their duties officially in May. The SU's activities go beyond representation of the undergraduate community as well and include many business interests on campus, most of which are located in the Students' Union Building (SUB). Businesses include several food and beverage operations, a bookstore for used books, compact discs, and souvenir clothing, as well as a video and games operation. Business space is available to university groups and private entrepreneurs in SUB as well as space for a variety of

university academic and support services. Services available to students include registries for examinations, tutoring, used books, a walk home service, student help and student advocacy services, information services in various locations on campus, financial aid, as well as a service for student groups. A complement of full and part-time office and student staff oversee general business activities of the SU and provide a variety of services to the undergraduate community. Student groups and associations can also make use of available space in SUB for meetings and office activities. The SU executive is responsible for a multi-million dollar operation and represent undergraduate students on a variety of committees within the university community and beyond.

Housing and Residents' Committee

The Housing and Residents' Committee (HARC) is a Students' Union committee and the umbrella organization for students living in university residences. Its membership is appointed, and the chairperson is a student and part-time employee of the SU. The other members of HARC are appointed by their respective residence association and are usually the presidents of these organizations. Other members of HARC sit semi-regularly on the committee and represent various student groups and university administration. HARC meets on a bi-weekly basis to discuss issues of common interest to students in residence as well as maintain a link with the Students' Union. Any administrative duties are handled by the chairperson.

Interfraternity Council

The Interfraternity Council (IFC) is responsible for activities of all the men's fraternities at the University of Alberta. In addition to meeting on a monthly basis, the IFC coordinates many social gatherings on campus with its sister organization the Panhellenic Council. Recruitment of new members and policing of its membership are also major responsibilities of IFC. The Council occupies office space with the Panhellenic Council in the basement of the Students' Union Building but holds no formal office hours. Members of IFC are appointed by their respective fraternities but certain positions are elected. Many members of IFC are likely to hold other student leadership positions on campus. The IFC currently consists of nine men's fraternities, who each

have one voting representative on council, a representative from the Panhellenic Council, a non-voting faculty Fraternity Advisor, and an eight member voting executive.

Panhellenic Council

The Panhellenic Council (PAN or Panhell) is the umbrella organization for all the women's fraternities on campus. Its activities mirror those of IFC and many social functions are coordinated efforts between these two fraternal organizations. Although PAN shares a common purpose with IFC, divides office space, and works together on many social and philanthropic endeavours, they hold separate meetings and remain two distinct organizations. PAN meetings are also scheduled monthly and the membership of the executive committee is made up of representatives of the women's fraternities. As with their male counterparts, PAN members may also occupy leadership positions with other student organizations on campus.

Characteristics of the Participants

Twenty-one student leaders were selected to take part in the study. Although the original plan was for four representatives on the executive committee of the following: Graduates' Students Association, Students' Union, Housing and Residents' Committee, and the fraternities, there was no single student organization which brought together all men's and women's fraternities on campus. When it became evident that there were two separate umbrella organizations for men's (IFC) and women's (PAN) fraternities, a request was made for each group to participate in the study. In addition, given the apparent scarcity of female student leaders in the first three groups, the addition of four female members from the women's fraternities enabled me to get a perspective on student leadership which might have been missing. The gender breakdown of participants was: 14 male and 7 female.

Student leaders from the five groups were diverse in their backgrounds which yielded "rich" information. At one end of the scale, members of the GSA had several years of leadership experience, both formal and informal, at this institution and others, and gave a interesting perspective on the role of leadership. The other four groups (SU, HARC, IFC, Panhell) consisted of undergraduate students with a range of leadership

histories. Although all participants were requested to share a number of leadership experiences, at various levels, the exact number of years in which each student participated in leadership activities was never identified. Ten participants interviewed for the study came from the city of Edmonton, five came from within the province, five came from outside the province. There was one participant from out of the country.

Most student leaders had participated in leadership activities prior to their arrival at the University of Alberta although a few participants identified little or no involvement in leadership prior to their arrival at university. Many student leaders began as volunteers with student organizations on campus while others were encouraged by peers or other student leaders to take on greater responsibility within a particular student organization. Many student leaders received some remuneration for their involvement although others accepted greater involvement on a strictly volunteer basis. Student leaders from the GSA and the SU had been elected by their constituent group while participants from HARC, IFC and PAN had been selected by their respective student organizations to represent their particular student organization.

Participants from the GSA, SU, IFC, and PAN were members of the executive committee of each student organization. In addition to the president of each of these student organizations, other participants in the study held various portfolios within each committee. Roles and responsibilities were varied and represented divergent interests of each student organization.

Pseudonyms

Table 4.1

List of Pseudonyms Used to Preserve the Anonymity of the Participants

GSA	SU	HARC	IFC	PAN
Adam	Ernie	Julia	Steve	Olivia
Bill	Frank	Kevin	Terry	Patsy
Carl	Gerry	Larry	Tom	Paula
Donna	Harry	Melvin	Verne	Rachel
	Isabelle			

Summary

This chapter provided a setting for the study. A brief description of the University of Alberta since its inception and an overview of student representation at the institution developed a framework for the research. The five student groups involved were outlined as well as their involvement on the university campus and their role in governance activities. While the Students' Union and the Graduate Students' Association represented larger segments of the student population, the Housing and Residents' Committee, the Interfraternity Council and the Panhellenic Council had responsibilities for specific factions of the student community. A breakdown of participants was also provided with some general demographic information including gender breakdown and relative leadership experience of each group. A table of pseudonyms associated with each student group was also included.

CHAPTER 5

FACTORS INFLUENCING LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR

This chapter presents the findings of the study with respect to factors influencing leadership behaviour. As well, results from the behaviour of student leaders during formal meetings are also outlined. Information obtained came from interviews with student leaders representing five student groups identified earlier as well as observations of meetings. Themes reflected the commonality of thought among participants in the study and were summarized for purposes of reporting. Further quotes by certain participants highlighted themes emerging from interviews.

Specific Research Question No. 1

Which Past Personal Experiences are Most Influential on the Leadership Behaviour of Students in Formal Leadership Positions?

Influence of Community

Participants in the study recognized several influences contributing to initial involvement and subsequent participation in leadership. Although broadly stated as personal experiences, many activities can be categorized as environments promoting involvement and then leadership. Of note was the community in which an individual was raised and types of activities in that community.

A supportive community had necessary facilities enabling involvement. A neighbourhood playground, a local church, or a community centre created a welcoming atmosphere. Several recreational facilities were also available, manned by skilled professionals, making such environments safe and secure for participants and stress free for parents. Frank was initiated when, "I started coaching basketball in a community league--community boys team--and I also later coached a community girls team . . . ." Students became involved, learned skills, and developed confidence to participate and experiment with other activities. Several programs were provided, activities stimulating the mind and body, encouraging creativity, challenging, and fostering experimentation. Participants were given opportunities to explore, develop new skills, make new friends, and grow as individuals. Confidence blossomed as new possibilities were examined and

challenges were tackled in safe and supportive environments.

Participants in the study were also presented with challenging surroundings. Places within various communities were identified, milieus encouraging participation, stimulating involvement, and recognizing achievement. Environments and individuals influenced students' process of involvement, programs stimulated participation and skill development. Air Cadets were considered a popular community activity and also providing initial leadership experience. Rachel remarked about early leadership involvement, "when I was about 12 or so I joined the Air Cadets and I stayed there for about a year and a half, two years . . . and that's I guess my first exposure to it." Structured experiences, headed by strong leadership, captivated many participants in the study and created an atmosphere encouraging long term involvement. Such programs appeared to have a degree of formality, tested the mind and were also physically demanding while offering opportunities to enjoy rigorous activity in supervised surroundings. Another example was the influence of the Young Mens' Christian Association as a milieu for demanding activities and development of the body as well as the mind. Formal and informal programs introduced participants to rudimentary aspects of leadership without much structure and many responsibilities. Olivia mentioned, "I was in something called Leaders at the YMCA in Vancouver and I did that for five years and it's just basically an evening for teens and you learn public speaking and community."

Influence of school. Respondents identified the school attended and activities organized by students within the school community as an important influence. Initial involvement at the elementary school level created an atmosphere of support enabling students to pursue further involvement at the intermediate level and then secondary school. Within a supportive community would also be a school or several schools, with many demanding curricular programs, and a strong after-school component with several activities. Ernie's involvement began, "at the elementary school level from when I started getting involved in sports, and again, it was just a natural evolution." Schools became social communities offering occasions to meet classmates as well as students from other schools. A fostering, supportive milieu encouraged students to participate in

similar activities upon reaching the postsecondary level. Julia mentioned, ". . . I've always been very involved in my school in some sort of form . . . I was part of the St. Albert Children's Theatre for about four years. I was involved in the Earth Club and Amnesty International when I was in high school." Harry observed:

> In grade eight our students union fell out and I decided to run for social convenor and I was pretty scared going into it as I had tough competition. One of the girls I was running against was at the time quite popular and in the end I won. I was a year younger than her and I wasn't supposed to get the position because I was in grade 8 instead of 9 . . . .

Specific experiences were provided by the school environment at various levels. Through many co-curricular programs and opportunities not provided elsewhere in the community, the school created an atmosphere encouraging personal growth and development. Terry demonstrated much personal initiative when in school:

> . . . while in grade eleven I wasn't happy with the way the high school ran its ski trips--who was available to go on it, so I decided to organize this myself. I'm going to start my own ski trip group and we're going to take off to the mountains on my bus and do it my way.

From initial involvement at the elementary school level, later through junior high school, and finally through high school, a structured environment became very influential. Patsy's most positive experience was a particularly eventful year in grade nine which she characterized as, ". . . totally awesome. I was involved in student council there and grad council and yearbook--basically every activity that happened at that school, I was somewhere behind it and I had just so much fun doing it."

Students suggested the size of the school had a tremendous influence on the degree of involvement and number of activities. Isabelle noted, "it was a small, small school, everybody got involved in everything, whether it was athletic or academic things, extracurricular things like theatre, sports, that kind of thing. I dabbled here and there, a little bit of everything." A small school created a comfortable and inviting atmosphere, facilitating involvement, providing an environment for experimentation in several types of activities, and even pushing students to engage in activities otherwise not pursued. Peer influences, although not stated explicitly, may have influenced participation at

smaller schools as the number of students for many activities might be at a premium and the expectation by friends as well as the school community in general was that each student would become involved. Isabelle suggested, "I was a new student in high school, just sort of starting from scratch, I was wanting to build up a base of friends and contacts." A student, having enjoyed a certain degree of success in a particular activity, would feel even greater pressure to get and stay involved. Although school size was reported as influential, other factors would have contributed to increased and continued participation in school activities.

Influence of sports. Another environment identified as influential was sports. As with other activities, interest in sports was generated very early in life. Young people were exposed to play at a young age. Although not formalized at the outset, young boys and girls began involvement in playgrounds and kindergartens and were soon exposed to the physical as well as social aspects of play and exercise. Sports provided an introduction to group activity beyond the school and its competitive atmosphere recognized strengths as well as limitations of young people. Ernie identified his:

> . . . experience playing competitive, organized sports--particularly hockey. I played rep hockey for about eight or ten years, the camaraderie, the team, the need to be a leader on the ice, and I guess kind of the feeling you get when you're involved in something successful like a team.

Individuals developing competencies valued by an immediate peer group used participation in sports as an avenue of initial involvement, recognition by peers, and exposure to both successes and failures. Sports also provided a learning and developmental environment that was both powerful and influential for young people.

Participants in the study were exposed to athletic activities at a young age and although active involvement might have diminished over the years, participation in sports was noteworthy. Carl highlighted the influence of a team and included such comments as, "the whole team sport thing--the fact that all of a sudden making a difference to a group such as that was probably one of the reasons why I got involved." Donna recognized her physical limitations but added, "I'm not an outstanding volleyball player but I was able to be the captain of the volleyball team," highlighting certain personal

skills valued by the rest of the group.

In addition, leadership qualities emerged in certain individuals, abilities enabling an individual and a team to enjoy success but also providing a positive learning and growth situation. Bill mentioned, "I was playing hockey, it was in junior high . . . I can remember my coach asking me right in front of the captain to go and clear everyone away and so he sent me . . . ." Right away, Bill understood that perhaps his leadership skills had become apparent to the coach.

Influence of work. Work was identified as another environment providing significant learning, creating a fostering, positive influence and promoting an atmosphere of support for young people. Initial involvement in a work setting, at an early age, influenced students' participation in various other activities. A cooperative milieu was created and had a very positive effect. Recalled by students with fondness for its learning atmosphere and supportive environment, Adam mentioned, "I started work at a very young age, I understood the power and flexibility of having your own money and controlling your destiny. I think I had a regular job at age 12 and it ran continuously up until a couple of years ago." Bill commented that, "I worked full time for seven years for the Winnipeg YMCA as a camp director and just found out about leadership and being responsible for facilities and people." Olivia also began work with the YMCA as a, "day camp counsellor for kids anywhere from five years old to sixteen years old and it was really interesting because I was only 17 or 18 and I would have 13 kids under my control." Beyond its apparent structure, work offered financial freedom and independence associated with having a regular source of income. A formal work environment provided possibilities for involvement and financial rewards.

Experiences at University

Exposed to positive living and learning environments during formative years, having enjoyed both successes and failures but still learning from such experiences, respondents brought these skills to the new, more challenging environment of university. Without initial experiences yielding positive results and creating a growing yet challenging environment, participants would not have ventured into the unknown and

more demanding confines of a campus community. Having learned skills at home, in school, as part of athletic team, or through work, self confidence was developed and the adventure of a new university community became far less threatening.

Influence of residences. Participants noted various positive aspects of a university environment and its influence on leadership behaviour. Students identified various settings playing key roles. Involvement in residential communities appeared to be an early initiation. Residence communities provided countless opportunities to become involved and test strengths and limitations. Students chose programming opportunities as part of residence orientation, social, or other activities offered throughout the year to develop a new social network or expand an existing system. Leadership possibilities were also provided to acquire needed skills. Donna identified:

> . . . from the very beginning of my university experience, I was involved in residence life as a house representative. In my first year a woman on my floor was promoted to president so I took on as house rep. I was involved with the university housing and then for three years after my first year, I was a residence advisor.

Kevin recalled:

> . . . the year after that I became a floor coordinator and went through some difficult phases . . . . I got involved in learning about the rest of the residents, what else was available, and I saw some people doing some good things--vice-presidents and presidents and some people doing some good work, so I was inspired to do that.

Whether by chance or a desire for greater involvement, possibilities afforded by residence coupled with its safe, secure nature presented an ideal opportunity for students to explore leadership activities.

Although most students valued similar opportunities for its recognition or possible rewards, acknowledgement by peers for dedication and efforts toward a community had a significant influence. Kevin identified a reward received for involvement as a first year student and the influence of that participation on further involvement in residence and later leadership activities. He remarked:

> At the end of the year as the Lister Hall Students' Association Awards banquet, I

> received the David Johnson Memorial Award which is for outstanding contribution by a first year student and at that point I wasn't sure if I was even planning to come back to residence.

Obtaining such appreciation, particularly when least expected, did much for self-esteem and self-confidence and created a springboard for future involvement. Similar recognition at an earlier age was also instrumental for Harry when he, "got an award for outstanding contribution to the students council and from that point on I think that was the deciding factor in . . . personally . . . you don't do too bad as a leader so why don't you go with it?" Having gained respect and admiration from peers had a significant influence on future direction, the degree of involvement, and leadership development.

Influence of fraternities. Beyond residences, participants remarked about the influence of other groups on campus for spearheading further involvement. Fraternities played a prominent role in getting students involved on campus as well as serving as an introduction to leadership. Participation within the campus community was initiated and provided similar opportunities for students to enjoy prior to leaving home. Students also used the fraternity experience for initiation into leadership activities. Gerry remarked:

> The first thing that comes to mind is two years ago a fraternity came to campus and wanted to develop and I'd always been apprehensive of fraternities because of the stigma and I wasn't really a person that fit in . . . when the opportunity came up to start a fraternity, well that changed everything all together because then you can add your own mark to the system and you can start a fraternity that meets your ideals rather than meeting someone else's.

The possibility of creating an organization and watching its development was tremendously appealing. Leadership responsibilities, work, satisfaction, and recognition made a very inviting and attractive offer.

Other students used the fraternity experience to highlight skill enhancement associated with leadership. Competencies may have emerged from past school experiences or arisen from significant community involvement. Such abilities may have been an extension of academic strengths. Students used the fraternity experience to test aptitudes in a more complex system, but not so difficult as to invite failure or ridicule.

Steve added, "I joined my fraternity in my first year as a pledge class, we had our own executive and I gravitated toward the money end of things so they elected me as pledge class treasurer."

Multiple learning opportunities. Students identified other activities on campus associated with groups as well as events requiring volunteers. Olivia remembered:

> . . . I walked past the volunteer services office at that point and saw that they needed volunteers for the first Week of Welcome for school and I signed myself up because I knew a couple of other people and that's where my university involvement began.

Isabelle explained her involvement at university, ". . . you're trying to develop a group of people that you can relate to and spend time doing things with . . . ." Such groups may be very small or larger ones like student government.

Other influential groups and activities on campus were identified. Involvement in the Week of Welcome activities, volunteering at the Information kiosks on campus, as well as important groups such as the Arts Students' Association and the Muslim Students' Association. Students found such experiences interesting and beneficial, laying the groundwork for future involvement with more recognizable groups on campus such as the Students' Union or the Graduate Students' Association. Students appreciated the benefits of participation and used such initial involvement as a springboard to other associations on campus, development of skills, improvement of new competencies, and participation in future leadership activities.

Influence of Key Individuals

Within each influential environment were individuals supporting students in early participation up to and including initial forays into leadership. Parents, teachers, coaches, siblings, peers, and significant others offered necessary encouragement to students, supported them during difficult times, and provided counselling, guidance, and overall inspiration.

Influence of teachers. Students interviewed had at least one teacher instrumental in stimulating student participation in school activities and also involvement beyond the school environment. Some students had more than one supportive teacher and were

quick to acknowledge the positive effect of these individuals. A relationship existed between the size of a school community and influence of the teaching staff. Isabelle could not disregard the association between class size in elementary, junior high, and senior high schools and the influence of teachers on subsequent involvement in school and community activities. She noted, "Because you're in a class of 20 or 25 people, there's a lot of one-on-one contact with teachers so they're always encouraging students to get involved and do a little more outside the classroom." Influence went beyond day-to-day contacts with teachers but was also dependent on the quality of interactions and the degree of on-going support. Melvin acknowledged that one influential teacher, "always spent 10 or 15 minutes of his lecture advising people. He was a great influence." Isabelle recognized the support of a number of teachers:

> There were three or four actually. One was my English teacher, Language Arts at the time actually, who was also my volleyball coach. . . . Our science teacher and my social teacher were into all kinds of things and that's why I got involved in theatre sports.

Teachers appeared able to carry influence and support of students beyond the classroom and even beyond the school.

Influence of coaches. Coaches were also acknowledged as positive supporters. Gerry was particularly impressed with, "one hockey coach who just kind of gave me the confidence to make me feel that I was doing something good." Other examples of influential coaches created a positive environment for athletes, ensured a developmental experience, and enabled participants to enjoy the sport regardless of outcome. Qualities developed in individuals allowing involvement and leadership possibilities to be explored beyond sport.

Influence of parents and siblings. Participants also recalled the positive influence of parents and siblings as key influences in stimulating involvement and continued participation in school and community activities. Parents provided similar encouragement as did teachers but at a more personal level. Students recalled with fondness words of parental support, encouragement, and the need to take a leadership

role. Larry commented, "all my life my parents have always stressed to me that I've been a leader in whatever I do." Continued voices of inspiration had a tremendous influence as students explored their strengths and limitations.

Another source of support within the family unit were older brothers and sisters with similar experiences, providing positive reinforcement as younger members prepared for involvement in community activities. Older siblings had a significant influence and paved the way for younger brothers and sisters to begin participation. If the reputation of an older brother or sister was positive, resistance for the younger sibling was eased and transition to involvement was less difficult. Bill acknowledged the efforts of one sister in previous years and how such experiences were used as a springboard into involvement and leadership. He commented, "I had a pretty large family and my sister was often very involved in a lot of student leadership in that sense."

Role models and mentors. Students also identified other individuals as role models or mentors. Certain individuals were recognizable figures in sports. However, leadership skills as well as athletic prowess were appreciated. Two athletes figuring prominently were Mark Messier and Kevin Lowe. The former, a star with the Edmonton Oilers hockey team during the late 80s and early 90s while the latter was equally recognizable for hockey ability but, with retirement at hand, was still able to make contributions in the dressing room and community. Both athletes were influential in the Oilers successful Stanley Cup campaigns and study participants would have been at an age when Oilers' successes of star athletes were featured prominently around the province. On Messier, Melvin added:

> He leads by example, he doesn't criticize others, draws the most out of people and he can definitely fire people up with what he says, but more often than not he fires people up with what he does. That's definitely the sign of a good leader.

Other participants identified significant peers during formative years as well as individuals introduced to them later in life. Confirmation from peers provided a boost in self-confidence and paved the way for future leadership activities. Rachel pointed to a close relationship with:

> . . . my best friend and I have a very close relationship. We feed off of each other, provide each other with a lot of encouragement and strength, and we're very supportive of each other. We are also very honest with each other and I think that plays an important role.

Other influential individuals included a political figure from the past, Che Guevara, the political freedom fighter from Cuba. Admiration stemmed from his efforts beyond Cuba that involved political causes around the world. As Gerry noted, "He didn't care about his wealth, he knew his family would be taken care of in Cuba because of the things he left in Cuba like in terms of education and health care". Past employers and supervisors were also identified as significant role models and mentors. Bill mentioned the, ". . . vice-president of the organization and he was very much a visionary and was really helpful for me in doing my job. I think a lot of the things about good leadership I learned from him."

Individuals within leadership ranks of the university were also highlighted. Present day colleagues and former leaders of student groups featured prominently. These persons served an important purpose of introducing students to the politics and culture of the institution, influential members, and the path to success within the university community. Presidents of student organizations, leaders of clubs or groups, and university administrators became role models and helped participants carve a niche, learn skills, and make a contribution to student leadership. Harry commented on a colleague within his organization, "he's a very consistent person, he's a very patient leader, he's very thorough when you see him handling personnel problems or managing conflict within a group of other headstrong people." Donna referred to a university administrator as one who, "has a lot of institutional memory and knows the players . . ., I can relate to her as well as she's someone who balances kind of being a mediating role but she also is strong with her own ideas and her own opinions." University academicians were also recognized. Professors had much influence on students, allowing challenges to conventional wisdom and enabling students to go beyond accepted boundaries. Patsy mentioned, "it was my first semester in my very first year of university, he's very cynical

and he's very humorous about politics, people, and about perceptions. I don't know if I see him as a kindred intellect, but I often go to him for advice."

Boyfriends, girlfriends, best friends, and someone's husband were also mentioned. Such individuals would have knowledge of students' strengths, weaknesses or limitations, and would also be sensitive to participants' situations in order to counsel or support. Opinions could be rendered regardless of the level of expertise. Paula, commenting on the relationship with a best friend added, "she and I have been best friends since we were two years old and she's someone that if there's something wrong, she's the person I'd talk to." Such friendships proved invaluable and supportive individuals featured prominently among respondents. Olivia identified her husband because, "We talk about everything-anything from financial matters, . . . he's my alter ego, he's my confidant, I rely on him 100% for everything." Rachel could not identify one individual because, "I think there are a lot of different people that I go to for a lot of different things. . . . So I think it depends on sort of what area that I'm dealing with--whether it's work or personal or something in between."

Frank had an interesting observation about role models and mentors, individuals perceived to have an influence. He noted:

> I don't know if it's just that I'm so arrogant that I don't recognize what people have already done or that I don't want to pretend I'm doing something that already has been done. But it's just that I don't know where I fit into someone else's role. I don't know if I want to model myself after them.

Other individuals identified as mentors could provide support and advice in times of need. Parents, particularly mothers, were recognized as well as older siblings. Harry's mother readily shared her management expertise, "she manages a large office of people, mostly women, so that would be tough, but . . . so she's got a lot of tricks up her sleeve too. Terry's mother knew very little about the work her son did but was still very influential as she, "my mom's always been a very liberal sounding board for any ideas that I've had. She's never pushed me in any direction but was always there if I needed help with anything." Other mentors included colleagues within an immediate student leadership group. Ernie, an incumbent president was identified by several colleagues.

Gerry's comments included, "I see us as similar is some ways and different in others and I probably would look at him for support but he probably wouldn't realize that. . . ." Harry added that Ernie, "is a wealth of experience and knowledge when it comes to fees. . . . He knows the people and he knows the system. He knows how Council is going to proceed with certain motions, how we word it. . . ." Certain immediate peers had a mentoring relationship with student leaders, particularly if they occupied a leadership role on campus and within a similar student group. Roommates were also identified by several participants as well as fraternity brothers. Steve added, "As for people I take a lot of advice from, it would be my fraternity brothers as key players in my life." Steve also mentioned, "my manager at Harvey's is a good person that I could confide in often . . . ."

Influential Activities

Participants also identified efforts stimulating initial involvement and then leadership. Some activities may not have focussed on leadership preparation but served as good experience. Harry's previous exposure to acting in community and school plays initiated an interest in leadership. He attributed efforts of putting himself "on the spot" on a regular basis through acting as being a good learning experience. He commented:

> I was an actor for the longest time. I acted in the Citadel and I acted in high school and that in itself is playing to a group of people and your gratification is dependent on the amount of applause you get or the type of reviews you receive or the rewards that you receive by people. Some people would say that politics and acting are not that unrelated.

Many students received initial exposure to leadership through the involvement of other individuals. Prompted by friends or peers to help out, students experienced early benefits of involvement, both intrinsically and extrinsically. Frank attributed an interest in leadership from initial involvement as campaign manager for a friend in a previous election. He noted:

> I don't know if you could say I caught the bug or it was just that the idea of running and winning in elections and developing positions on issues that really caught my eye. I was campaign manager for a four person slate, I was running and three of them won. It felt very good.

Exposure to politics and political issues generated an interest and fuelled a fire for a

person or a cause. Although a colleague or friend was not elected or a cause was not pushed through, a "smouldering ember" remained in the hearts of several individuals and a peer felt compelled to "pick up the ball." Such drive or commitment may have generated initial participation and a friend may be responsible for later involvement in leadership.

Positive Aspects of Past Experiences

Participants commented positively about experiences with a degree of flexibility, encouraging creative expression and innovation. Freedom provided individuality in certain situations and created expressive, leadership environments. As Bill noted:

> There is a lot of freedom and especially in contrast to a position where you're actually employed somewhere, you're supposed to do as dictated by your boss. Although there is responsibility, it's really open to me to decide where and what are the ways. So that's really positive.

Confronting new challenges. Students skilled in one area also appreciated the challenge of working in an unrelated environment. Isabelle remarked that it was, "a total change in environment and conversation and use of your skills from athletics or the classroom."

Skill development. Participants were also able to experiment with new skills. As Harry noted:

> I don't think all my other leadership experiences combined come close to what this job is doing for me, what this experience is, just in terms of personal growth and development, acquiring all the skills that are going to be necessary down the road, developing the confidence to get out of this place and into the real world and tackle whatever challenges and opportunities are there.

Effective interpersonal skills promoted listening techniques, fostered empathy, and created an atmosphere of help and support. Harry mentioned that learning interpersonal skills was critical as, "we still don't know everything we should know and there are little techniques, little habits, things that you should do when you're in these situations that you're on the learning curve right now."

Helping others. Other positive aspects of leadership involved satisfaction gained from helping colleagues and peers. As Verne remarked, "There were a number of people

who actually came in and did it [thanked me] personally which really surprised me but just the fact that they said we appreciate what you've done and what we learnt from me and about leadership." Providing help appeared to have been a great source of satisfaction and motivation. Many negative aspects of leadership could be ignored when involvement became personally fulfilling. Ernie commented, "It's just an emotional high to be able to help someone."

Feelings of accomplishment. Participants also mentioned positive aspects surrounding doing one's job or accomplishing certain tasks. Great pleasure was derived from successfully completing an assignment. Harry referred to:

> the self satisfaction you get from being involved. In a lot of cases, it's a sense of self worth--that you are contributing, that you are doing something, that your life has meaning, you're benefiting not only yourself but a lot of other people. So just this general good feeling you have . . .

Upward mobility. Other positive aspects included the ability to move up through the system and gain more experience. Opportunities were made available to tackle new, more demanding challenges or learn new skills. Steve pointed out, "having sort of progressed through the system, having had my abilities recognized and sort of being promoted and getting a chance to continue with new areas of growing." Students often made a conscious effort, once initiated, to move up through an organization, meet greater challenges, be given added leadership responsibilities, and learn new skills. In some cases, actions were not deliberate. Other members saw potential and offered encouragement.

Recognition by peers. Students also noted the appreciation of colleagues. Larry mentioned, "you get the acknowledgement from the community and you get a lot of responsibility and if you take care of that in the first year, then the community will say we want him to come back and fortunately that's what happened." Bill added, "the times when really the praises come through is when . . . or when the feelings come through is when you make things simpler for people. I think that's one of the biggest things we can do." Rewards and recognition by peers also influenced positively and accelerated pursuit of other leadership activities. Terry pointed out:

> that does make it positive because it's very nice to have people come and say 'hey, I recognize you, you're the president. It's good to see you.' You get to meet people and deal with people and that is the best part of the job.

Carl, acknowledging the value of people recognizing contributions of others remarked:

> In a position like this, if you look at it two dimensionally, they're things you have to achieve and you know how to get there and you know how you do it. The way to get to it is through people. Now, if you're only approaching people and you need them for something, they're going to pick up on that. I guess it's to always respect other people and little thank you cards go a long way.

Personal growth. Finally, respondents also recognized personal growth associated with leadership. As Steve mentioned:

> just in terms of personal growth and development, augmenting all the skills that are going to be beneficial down the road, developing the confidence to get out of this place and into the real world and tackle whatever challenges and opportunities are there.

Students reported they were sensitive to skill development resulting from leadership involvement. Opportunities were explored as new initiatives aided in personal and professional development. Greater involvement and challenges might even be sought as learning and skill acquisition were taking place. Former skills had been refined and improved due to exposure to a new group and different challenges brought forward by new circumstances.

Negative Aspects of Past Experiences

Disciplining peers. Turning to negative experiences influencing leadership behaviour, students referred to an emotional aspect of leadership when forced to terminate certain individuals. Adam mentioned, "Having to terminate a couple of people or suspend them from good paying jobs and then having to take that away from them. I guess that's the biggest negative." Positions of responsibility brought negative circumstances. Students took on responsibilities, fulfilled roles, and carried out certain unpleasant duties. Even with volunteer organizations, expectations remained that leaders perform tasks seen as distasteful. To reprimand, scold, and terminate a colleague, particularly an individual giving time willingly to an organization was unpleasant.

However, a leader was expected to perform such duties.

Stress of leadership. Students also mentioned stress as a negative product of leadership. More precisely, Frank referred to:

> The activities that I carry beyond the walls, the kinds of situations the students are in. How to deal with them is the biggest thing because that is one of the functions that I observe and I have to come up with a way to resolve a lot of these problems.

Although stress was viewed negatively, a powerful learning experience awaited and positive results could be achieved. For example, Gerry mentioned:

> the stress that comes from being involved or added responsibilities--the fact that whenever you're in a position of leadership you can't please everybody all the time. There's always somebody upset with you and always somebody barking at you for some reason or another and it gets to you once in a while.

Stress involved more than dealing with a demanding situation. Circumstances might require a leader to make a decision affecting other people. In the case of student government, decisions influenced several thousand students and such judgments were perceived as demanding. Students gave thought to a solution but also to possible ramifications on other members of the community. Reactions of a constituent group had to be considered and conclusions reached without facts could be a source of great concern. Related to stress in leadership, Steve added, "there is a lot of stress, a lot of responsibility, and the fact that regardless of what decision you make, there's always people who are upset and frustrated with it and that's a fact of political life."

Personal sacrifices. Students also mentioned other stressors related to academics, social activities, and other university functions. Academic performance was compromised as classes were juggled around leadership responsibilities and related duties. Students were often forced to make choices of social activities and time with friends and family. However as Tom relayed, "the one thing I do regret is that it did take away a lot on my life, and unfortunately, that was secondary to me at the time."

Lack of support. Donna identified the lack of support from parents as having a negative effect on leadership and the resulting learning opportunity. She mentioned, "I think it was because I was hindered personally, my parents were not very supportive. I

wasn't getting the support from them I would have wanted for achieving a number of activities." Larry recalled an absence of support from individuals within the organization and commented:

> there were a few people who were very honest and genuine in their approaches to doing things and I was very happy working with those individuals. However, the overall mind set of the committee was kind of backwards and so it was a real frustrating experience for me.

Terry added, "it's really difficult when you hire these people thinking they're capable of doing a job at hand and along the road they don't live up to expectations."

Frustrations. Frustrations associated with trying to bring a group of people "on board" with an issue contributed to a student's failed expectations. Gerry noted:

> at times you get so focussed on some of the events you're doing, that you forget about the people themselves within the fraternity and making sure that everyone is sort of on the same page . . . we lost some good people because we didn't focus on them. We were focussed more on reaching our goals and establishing some of those foundations that we needed.

Other negatives. Students also identified other negative details of leadership. Political aspects of the experience were mentioned. Olivia remarked of her involvement with Air Cadets. "If a person deserved to be promoted into their position, it was no, they can't have it and there was no reason or explanation . . . ." Student leaders added that although certain experiences might not have been completely positive but more challenges to various responsibilities. Carl, using an old saying to describe challenges he faced commented, "anything that doesn't kill you makes you stronger" and referred to the least positive experiences as, "a challenge and a learning opportunity."

Influences on Present Leadership Behaviour

Respondents were also asked to relate past experiences, leadership and non-leadership, which helped them in their present leadership situations. Reactions were varied but focussed on several key aspects of leadership.

Developing proper timing. Based on such experiences, Melvin identified timing as a key, time when a forceful leader was required and time for colleagues to lead. He commented that over time, he had learned to pull back from certain situations and let

others take the lead. Such an awakening would have been very difficult, even impossible during his early years of leadership. As he noted, "sometimes you'd have to take leadership, sometimes you would relinquish it, sometimes you'd just accept there's two of us."

Opportunity to observe others. Student leaders also acknowledged experiences gained beyond traditional leadership expectations. Past work experiences and opportunities to observe co-workers as well as supervisors at work contributed immensely to appropriate leadership behaviour used in present leadership activities. Students also noticed the deportment of co-workers and supervisors deemed less appropriate and used such experiences constructively. Adam remarked, "people don't treat others with respect and it's probably something that's blatant just about anywhere you go and that's one thing that really bothers me."

Differences between men and women. Donna noted behavioural differences among women and particularly the use of emotions in leadership situations. She added, "But from seeing others that do show emotion or don't show emotion or just really cold, it's clear to me that for me it makes more sense to be an emotional person . . . ."

Demonstrating self-confidence. Self confidence was also highly regarded in leadership. Other leaders, role models, mentors demonstrated confidence in students' abilities as leaders. Therefore, Ernie commented:

> it becomes your responsibility to execute that responsibility and you doing that to someone else, you giving someone responsibility, they're going to do the exact same thing, that's the biggest thing, give someone responsibility, they're going to do it.

However, this did not come without certain risks as Harry added, "once you do surprise them, they expect lots more from you. So then the pressure's on and then you have to do a good job and more." In addition, Gerry mentioned, "You feel responsible to provide, to set an example that leaders should be perceived as doing things, as leading and you should also be doing those things."

Pleasure of past experiences. Much learning had taken place during previous involvement, knowledge from past leadership activities as well as other endeavours. Patsy mentioned that enjoyment of past leadership opportunities affected the pleasure derived from current involvement and from people. She noted:

> One of the big ones I think is learning that if you're in a leadership position with a number of other people and you develop that support group, you're out of your mind to shut one of those people out because you're making your support group weaker and not as effective.

A willingness and ability to include many individuals facilitated the work as a leader but just as importantly, created an environment for other members to become comfortable with colleagues in leadership roles.

Lessons learned. Participants reflected on lessons learned from past failures and experiences. Although disappointing and viewed negatively, students admitted that much knowledge was gained from unsuccessful situations. Students also confirmed that such experiences, when examined in its totality, provided much information. As Terry remarked:

> when you interact you get more information and you always get more skills. So when you do a job as a volunteer, you always gain something from that job. So you cannot specify but you're always building those skills through the experience.

Listening and observing. Students also identified benefits derived from developing effective listening skills as well as observing colleagues and peers. To sit back, listen, and understand an issue from another person's perspective could be valuable in improving effectiveness as a student leader, but also proving beneficial in the future. Carl highlighted an episode emphasizing valuable listening skills and their potential contribution to leadership. He remarked:

> . . . one of the big things I learned about listening was taught to me by a 13 year old girl who did not want to be at camp but I sat down and listened and worked with her. She stayed and at the very end she hopped out of the boat and ran up and gave me a hug and said thanks. Obviously this works.

Building relationships. Students also noted powerful relationships that developed from involvement in leadership activities. Members of an organization and other

participants influenced leadership successes as well as failures. Building relationships became important as benefits were often undetermined at present. Isabelle commented, "you need to make a constant effort to work on weak relationships as opposed to just floating around with the fun stuff and the stuff that already works." Building a rapport, even with difficult individuals, could have positive consequences in the future.

Trust, communication, and organization. Participants also commented on three other aspects of past experiences valued now and to be appreciated in the future. People must be trusted to carry out duties and responsibilities assigned. While times may arise when expectations might not be met and doubts set in, depending on colleagues remains important. Trust was not given and taken away but built and nourished through good and bad times. As Harry commented about confidence someone showed in him, "People that put confidence in you, people that were thinking you'll be capable of doing the job, but at the same time, that's what motivated me to do the job and to try to do the job." Gerry added, ". . . people look up to you in a lot of ways. People expect a lot out of you in terms of your behaviour and in terms of doing something for them. People are always looking to you for the answers."

Students highlighted effective communication skills from past leadership. Effectiveness was enhanced when expectations were communicated clearly, frustrations and disappointments were shared without hurting or offending, small and large groups could be addressed without trepidation, and conflict among colleagues might be resolved amicably. Enhanced communication skills had significant value to students in leadership. Terry specified, "One definite thing is doing interviews. That helped me in handling my communication skills and also effectively reading people. In that aspect, you definitely ask the important questions and you get to know what you need to know."

Finally, to organize oneself and others was also noted as a necessary learning component of leadership. Planning a day's activities became a valuable tool for present leadership situations as well as future activities. Rachel commented that, "I learned about organizing groups, planning activities, making agendas, general people skills, learning about different personality styles." In addition, organizing other members of a group to

carry out assigned duties proved beneficial and respect from colleagues and peers was gained.

Specific Research Question No. 2

What leadership behaviour is demonstrated by students in formal leadership positions?

Students in the study were asked to comment on behaviour exhibited during various leadership activities particularly involving several individuals such as group meetings. Students were observed during one such meeting followed by a series of questions. Information was also collected from personal interviews.

Formality versus Informality

Students were asked to react to the formality versus informality of each meeting. Although a certain degree of formality was exhibited, all meetings remained informal to ensure information could be shared, discussions held, and decisions made.

Formality. During the Graduate Students' Association session, formality existed as all attendees had a responsibility to contribute during the meeting. An agenda was prepared, reports expected, and everyone became involved in the process. Adam noted, "There's a formality as everyone has a portion of their portfolio on the agenda, . . ." while Bill added, ". . . we go around the table, everybody takes their 10, 15 minutes, updates the others on what's new in their portfolio and then there's the occasional interjection." Formality ensured deliberate actions would be taken on various aspects of the meeting, a process was followed, and all members had input. Formality brought order and structure to proceedings, a format existed, and responsibilities were shared.

A desire for formality was often based on historical precedence. An initial view of an organization would detail "how things are done" and responsibilities assigned to each individual. Olivia suggested that, "It depends on the chair too because she may have something she needs to say. I've sat in meetings where the chair follows the agenda and won't amend it . . . ." During observation sessions, formality served to remind members that organizational effectiveness often rested with structure in reporting activities and assigning roles. Changes were still made but formality and structure were retained.

Meetings provided a framework and ensured information was passed along in an orderly fashion. Frank suggested:

> We try and follow that [order and agenda] to give some flow to the meeting . . . the only time I really try to recognize people and keep a speakers' list is when things are starting to get a little out of hand with too many people trying to jump in and just give some structure to the discussion.

Communications remained accurate and precise through minutes of meetings and proper record keeping allowed an organization to transmit its history each year.

Finally, the formality of a meeting was an opportunity for regular group interaction and conducting business of the organization. Given the lack of familiarity with new members, Steve mentioned, ". . . these guys I don't know very well and at meetings, you keep it formal just to get things done and get out of here." Meetings were scheduled on a regular basis and an established process allowed organizational tasks to be attended.

Informality. Students also commented on the degree of informality existing during meetings. Informality allowed changes in an agenda, enabled input to be received at any time during meetings, and drew valuable opinions from all members. Ernie related, " . . . there's an informality in the sense that everyone when they have a point to make, by and large they jump in and make their point without necessarily being recognized by the president although in some instances it does occur." Challenging the notion that informality during meetings could be very unproductive as Paula added, ". . . as long as you get everything done, it doesn't matter what order you did it in." Informality served as a catalyst for discussion at any time and on any issue.

During five meetings attended, both informality and formality were present. While formality usually was observed at the beginning of each meeting, several occasions were witnessed when a meeting would revert to a formal approach. When an important issue was discussed or a lack of understanding of a serious problem arose, a more structured format would be adopted. Members attending regained control and acceded to presidents' requests for order.

As well during these meetings, formality was welcomed in the presence of

strangers and outsiders. When non regulars attended, an expectation existed that more control would be exerted. Group business would be addressed and meetings ran smoothly. In most cases, such order was for the benefit of the new people rather than an accurate reflection of proceedings. Several meetings progressed rapidly, with an agenda and issues were dealt with quickly. In the absence of an observer and other non regulars in attendance, the flow of a meeting and its length might have been different.

Formality in a meeting was warranted if a leader imposed structure regarding an issue or one aspect of a meeting. Such occasions occurred infrequently during the five meetings. However, a few situations arose as a leader took control of a meeting and asserted a degree of authority. Very little insistence was required, members would commit to a leader's wish for order. An understanding was apparent that leaders would allow a meeting to unfold, but at a time deemed appropriate and necessary, a degree of formality was reestablished. Other members understood the necessity of leaders to act accordingly if meetings were to progress, issues were to be addressed, and sessions concluded within a reasonable time.

Formality was also desirable when an issue had come to a standstill. On such occasions, members expected input from the president, a decision, or a suggestion to resolve an impasse. While few members anticipated the president to stand and render a verdict, a discussion would ensue to a point when an opinion would be given. Such comments might be perceived as a decision however statements were merely suggestions to be taken or discarded.

In five meetings observed, input from the president was valued. However, comments was never perceived as the last word on an issue unless a president made concluding comments or suggested that a topic be revisited at a future meeting. Acceptance of a president's authority as formal leader would bring debate to closure or agreement to resolve an issue in the next few minutes. Other matters needed to be discussed.

Formality in meetings was also observed when individuals presented reports to groups. Such occasions prompted cessation of all other discussion and attention was

directed at specific individuals. With few exceptions, no interruptions were allowed and comments were confined to the end of presentations. At such time, questions would be raised and concerns addressed. In all cases observed, reports were relatively brief and groups moved to questions.

Even though formality was observed and aspects of all meetings were predictable, a degree of informality was still apparent. Most participants, even during formal presentations, used every opportunity to make well placed comments about individual behaviour or comical situations. Statements were not made to offend but to poke fun at other members. Position or status did not deter a well-timed comment. Interjections would be made and reactions received. An individual, at the receiving end of a well-placed comment, would offer a reply. Such a opportunity was perceived as fair and just but once a second comment was made, the discussion was usually closed.

Informality was also used to relieve tension during a strenuous discussion. Certain issues obviously "touched a nerve" with student leaders and lively discussion ensued. Problems tended to be germane to one member's portfolio and a volley of comments came from various participants. If remarks remained general and no individual took a stand, a discussion would continue and the matter resolved. However, if comments became personalized or one individual reacted emotionally, the stress level would increase. An interjection would prompt a reaction from other members and remove the focus of attention on the issue and stress created. Such a statement would be made at a moment when the discussion had been serious or a topic had been debated long enough. If a problem was beyond resolution, new information was needed, or a sufficient amount of time had taken place, one member took the initiative and brought levity. By all accounts, discussion was concluded.

Informality during the meeting was also an opportunity to bring proceedings to closure. If members had grown tired, noticed serious issues had been resolved, and the remaining portion of a meeting was unproductive, a switch to informal discussion, bantering, or other activities would take place. A leader, noticing such activity and the length of a meeting, moved to conclude and members dismissed. Such insightful

observations usually garnered respect, demonstrating a sensitivity to membership needs and concerns. When asked to react to the formality and informality mix of meetings, Isabelle commented, "I think as everybody has gotten to know each other a lot professionally and personally and they feel more comfortable around each other and I think we kind of see that evidence in the executive meetings." Gerry concluded:

> We likely have 18 of these things a year and if you want to run it in a very starchy, structured formal way, they are going to be some of the most boring meetings you've ever been to. But a lot of the fun I've had working in this organization and a lot of the success are the interpersonal dynamics. So we try to encourage that within reason but you still cover the issues. I don't know how effective we'd be as an organization if these things became too structured.

Voting Versus Consensus.

During meetings observed, no specific instances were witnessed when actual voting decided an issue. Although one group commented that quorum was lacking for a vote to occur, in all other meetings, voting did not take place and was not integrated into the meeting protocol. Consensus appeared to be the popular approach. Arriving at decisions and utilizing a particular procedure was a reflection of an adopted format for meetings. Since all five groups jockeyed between formal and informal sequences, informality brought on a less structured approach to decision making. To combine formal and informal procedures during meetings and revert to a structured process of decision making would have been uncharacteristic.

All five groups observed used a consensus approach to decision making and were quite comfortable with the process. Such a procedure appeared to be a natural result of informal meetings. A call for a vote was never made although presidents may have acquiesced to such a demand. Decisions were arrived with no apparent difficulty as all issues appeared to be resolved following a period of questions and debate.

Certain members highlighted the importance and practicality of consensus during group interviews. Carl commented:

> We don't want to do something if two people don't like the [decision] and I think we've learned too that it's not very effective to go away angry, it's better to say at the time that I disagree with this and this is why.

Frank added that consensus is usually achieved quite readily because of the single minded purpose of the group. "I think we were just lucky, we all understood the extreme value to walking away happy and to do that we really have to communicate."

Obtaining input. Importance was also attached to receiving input from all in attendance. Beyond participating in meetings as representatives of smaller organizations on campus, constituent groups, or simply representing a portfolio, much emphasis was tied to ensuring that everyone had an opportunity to speak and share their views. Input from all sources was perceived to be important. Tom regarded reactions from all parties as a vital role of an executive committee charged with representing interests of so many fraternities on campus. "It is important to get input from everyone, everyone has a say on an issue, every chapter has something to say, it's whether they bring it [to the meeting]." Providing comments enabled all representatives to fulfill respective mandates and speak on behalf of various groups.

Role of Conflict

Many participants identified conflict as an everyday occurrence at meetings. Although all members shared a common interest as students, most participants also maintained a single-minded purpose as representatives. Consensus at meetings was achieved yet conflict emerged. Differing points of views were heard and positional statements were identified. Conflict became an ordinary part of a meeting process and accepted by group members. Discussions could go on behind closed doors and become heated if necessary. However, once meetings were concluded and members left, unanimity was expected. As Donna commented:

> I think we always serve two functions. You always serve the function of trying to get what you want to get accomplished on that committee, but you also want to make sure that everything you say is heard from the Graduates Students' Association and so . . . sometimes it's a trade off.

Gerry added:

> You have people who fill individual portfolios with specified responsibility and that's probably your first loyalty. But they've also got to function as a cohesive executive and that really requires the four who aren't in a specific portfolio to listen to students and executive members and give responses to the one who's

portfolio issue we're discussing.

Although conflict was present during meetings and day-to-day activities of each group, overall objectives of organizations were never compromised and individuals were not prevented from expressing views. Conflict was present within organizations, played a part during meetings, but did not impinge on groups' overall abilities to represent and meet the needs of each constituency.

Roles of Members

When queried on perceived roles played by members, opinions varied. Many students recognized formal roles occupied as members of executive committees. Representatives had been elected or selected from specific groups on campus. Whether graduate students, students in residence, or members of fraternities, an obligation existed to look after the interests of specific factions within larger umbrella organizations.

Formal and informal roles. Students identified with structured roles on a committee. Representing constituent groups, preparing and attending meetings, and providing reports were visible expectations. Roles tended to be clear and well defined so new members knew their duties within the organization. Student leaders also had familiarity with informal roles. Knowledge may have come from advice, support, and counselling of mentors. Understanding informal roles could have been the result of observing other individuals perform similar duties, particularly role models. Several years of experience may also have led new members to appreciate informal responsibilities. Participants commented on various informal roles within a committee meeting structure. Remarks revealed interesting observations of the five groups in the study. Students used terms such as mediator, motivator, facilitator, moderator, advisor, worker, watchdog, and schmoozer to describe informal responsibilities within each group.

Mediator. First, some student leaders saw a role as mediator, one charged with building bridges and forging alliances between individuals or factions within committees. Students brought divergent views together so agreement could be reached. A mediator role was difficult, requiring a compromising personality and ability to make concessions.

Such a responsibility became demanding as issues often polarised student organizations. Steve acknowledged the role of mediator and added, "I think that, internally with our group, I act as a mediator or communicator of a variety of larger issues whereas a lot of the others are more involved in the specifics of projects." Noting the quest for consensus within a group as a mediating function, Patsy added:

> I like to have consensus and I like to have people in agreement with what we're doing and I like to have people happy. I want real information to get out. I want people to feel comfortable, to be honest, but I try to dampen or soften harshness that arises or conflict between strong personalities.

Motivator. Certain members also took the role of motivator. Such a person used unspecified opportunities during meetings to make amusing comments or bring a group back to an issue. Kevin commented:

> I've taken the role of motivator. I have some goals I'd like to accomplish this year, I like to see the communities get along between them much more--not just better but more--doing more things, getting more involved with each other. I think I have a little different role from a few of them right now because I was here all summer so I've got four months of experience.

Keeping a group on track became a main responsibility so business concerns could be addressed. Isabelle saw such a role for someone who, ". . . just make people very, very at ease--they're very friendly, they make people very comfortable, break down their wariness and their defences and create a comfortable environment. Those are very strong leaders."

Facilitator. Related to the role of mediator is a facilitator, an individual bringing issues for discussion, creating an environment for debate, and understanding various points of view. In reference to a colleague's role as facilitator, Harry added, "he gives us ideas and advice and feedback and at the same time solicits feedback from us." Julia's role as facilitator revolved around:

> I don't feel I should be impressing upon them what they need to be doing in their associations. I can present ideas, I'd be willing to be there as support, information, whatever is needed in that respect. But I don't wish to take any position of charge, just to make sure that everybody is on the same track, they have the same vision, to ensure they are hearing each other correctly or trying to

> bring a different perspective if they need to. But making sure that communication is always open.

Kevin, expanding on a role of facilitator commented, "I guess a meeting facilitator, trying to get input from the others as much as possible. Over the last few executives, there have been problems getting people to speak. It's just basically organizing thoughts and keeping things on track." Facilitating discussions required knowledge of key group concerns, understanding people, a degree of diplomacy, appreciation of member contributions, and a clear commitment to resolving issues.

Moderator. Another role often required was a moderator of discussions or proceedings. Rachel saw such a role as:

> someone who's been through a lot and offers advice because sometimes some ideas come out of left field. To point out practical aspects, the way things would work, or why things wouldn't work. Also to provide a philosophical background or more of a reason why we should do it based on principles.

From the reaction of the participants, a moderator became an important element to group effectiveness during spirited discussions as many individuals were prepared to have input on a topic.

Advisor. A role of advisor also surfaced, particularly with groups with a rich history. An advisor emerged within a group or the role would be assumed by an outsider. To ensure credibility, an insider became advisor because of a lengthy membership with a group and had held several positions, formal and informal. An outsider would also have been a member of a group several years ago and had maintained an indirect association. Now the person had been asked to assume a counselling role and aid a group during a turbulent time or to fulfill an identified need.

Worker. Another role highlighted and vital to any successful group was a "doer". A person taking such a responsibility was quite comfortable carrying out the mundane activities. Carl commented on his perceived role as a "doer":

> . . . very concrete things that have to be done within that group and it's not necessarily getting involved in discussions. . . . I think my role generally is to keep the office running, making sure things get paid on time, taking care of the administrative matters which is important because it allows other people to go do

> other things. And that's important I think from the overall leadership of the organization--things have to be taken care of inside so others can go do other things outside.

Watchdog. Related to a position of doer were watchdogs for organizations. Harry perceived his role as "monetary watchdog" and related:

> In the past we've lost a lot of our influence so my goal is to question every single thing that comes across, do we have to spend money on that? And I might really come across as a fiscal tightwad, but I think it's a very important role to really question--now is this something that the group thinks is a big enough priority to actually spend this amount of money on.

Such a specific role among doers fulfilled an important responsibility for the membership.

Schmoozer. Individuals were also referred to as "schmoozers," visible members of an organization, due to positions or contacts, had greater interactions with various members of the campus community. Such individuals demonstrated their worth to each organization by maintaining strong relationships with administrators, university officials, and other student groups. Schmoozers established links with other student leaders as well as the university community and were prepared to use such contacts to gain information or favours at various times.

During the course of interviews, most students identified other roles during meetings. However, Kevin bemoaned a responsibility taken as a result of past experiences and past involvement with other groups. He added:

> I still have a tendency to control some of the discussion, where it's going. I find myself pointing . . . ok, you talk, you talk. . . . I think it falls into the description of other members of the floor who have a very powerful role because they have the ability to mediate, they've got the respect because they have experience on the floor.

Melvin observed another specific duty while noting:

> My role on the executive is not really a role. It's more of a strategic position. You have to be one of the steps on the ladder. Everybody gets pieced together, everybody helps one another to reach your end goal which is to have a positive year. Kind of a leaning post also because everybody is in the same position that I'm in.

In observing another student group, a perception existed that all members had similar roles. Everyone was striving to achieve the same goal despite different backgrounds and experiences. Patsy highlighted an impartiality required at meetings in order to be productive and the organization can be effective. She commented:

> I perceive it as being a representative position. I present my fraternity to the rest of the fraternities and then from there I present all the women's fraternities to the men's fraternities. I have to be very unbiased at these meetings.

Whether such a relished role was unclear however, realities required student representation and student advocacy of a smaller group within a larger organization. Paula, responding to the duality of responsibilities commented:

> my main role is to report on the thing that I'm concerned with which is the external influences on the fraternities. I'd say a secondary role is that I try to keep in tune with what's affecting the organization as a whole.

Role of President

While duties were assumed by various individuals at different times, the role of a president was varied. Two presidents recognized their role of figurehead and spokesperson as traditional ones. Adam commenting on the former noted:

> I have certain constituencies on campus who expect to hear from me when they're hearing from the GSA so it makes things speed up a little bit when I get involved. So the figurehead links in with coordinating the efforts of the executive . . . .

Ernie's view of spokesperson pointed to, "my role is basically act as a guiding light I guess for the rest of the executive. You have all sorts of specific responsibilities . . . ." While a president could have many duties, occupying more than one formal role was unlikely.

A president may not have formally assumed many roles but subtly recognized a need for a specific function at a particular time. Situations prompted the need for an advisor, a moderator, a motivator, or a facilitator. Functions were dictated by circumstances of meetings or developing situations. Ernie commented on the multiplicity of roles occupied by a president and stated:

> You have all sorts of specific responsibilities, but basically to be here and help out

> in all portfolios, and also to make sure we're focussing on our organizational priorities. My job right now is really to bring everyone together, to look at the big picture, as a whole, figure out whether what everyone is doing individually fits within our overall mandate and our goals and objectives.

Such an all-encompassing role for a president of a student group could not be dismissed. A president assumed various duties as dictated by emerging needs of an organization and its membership. However, evaluations were also made relating to an organization and its overall mandate. A president's role was vital in helping set an initial direction but also assessing periodically the status of a group in meeting responsibilities to its constituent group and overall goals of the organization.

Importance of Role Modelling

Many participants mentioned personal expectations of being a role model as well as its importance for other student leaders outside the formal meeting environment. While reactions were unsolicited, strong sentiments were expressed that student leaders must be model representatives and they have a greater responsibility beyond a specific student group, beyond the larger organization, and to student leadership as a whole. Such responsibility came from actions or behaviours expected within the campus community and beyond.

Being a role model for other student leaders originated, in some instances, from personal experiences in leadership. Students indicated one or several individuals with exemplary behaviour worthy of emulation. However, with few exceptions, role models were exhibiting proper conduct and not necessarily modelling leadership behaviour. Such individuals were demonstrating deportment students identified as positive and wished to copy. Students may have identified aspects of behaviour worthy of note but their conduct in leadership situations remained unclear.

Student leaders understood that role modelling was necessary. Within each group, at meetings, and even in social situations with other members, a certain personal conduct was expected, behaviour with group members, and even deportment outside the organization. While angelic behaviour was not an overriding concern, conduct consistent with perceived behavioural characteristics of student leaders was important. Leaders

were expected to be good students academically, to have positive regard for themselves, their fellow students, and other community members, as well as having respect for university property. Individuals outside a group and more importantly members within an organization had certain expectations of students in leadership positions.

Appropriate role modelling behaviour also stemmed from past experiences, usually observing other leaders' behaviour during meetings, as well as demeanor in informal leadership situations. Larry mentioned, ". . . you always observe people by their behaviour, not by talking." Such experiences provided important information regarding expectations of leaders as well as undesirable behaviour.

Students were also influenced by negative leadership conduct. Kevin pointed to, "The most important thing I'd say is you have to be a role model. It's the most important thing in, no matter how you talk. If your behaviour doesn't match your talk, you're always going to be a loser."

Pressure of Leadership

Participants commented on the pressure associated with leadership and various roles occupied within the student leadership community. Strain existed at all levels of leadership and the data collected identified stresses felt by participants. One pressure was that of role model for student leaders and other students. Strain came from behaving in a certain fashion, preparing for meetings, commenting intelligently on a issue, and being the type of person students could emulate in the future. Tension appeared to be proportional to the type of group a leader was representing. Members of the Students' Union and the Graduate Students' Association felt a certain degree of anxiety from group expectations, peers, general undergraduate or graduate student constituencies, and overall university community. Other student groups did not sense the same tension as expectations were not as great. However, fraternities and residence associations continued to feel a need to perform. Role models were still needed but the strain appeared to be different and not as pronounced.

Pressure also existed in performing various duties as student leaders within specific representative organizations. Students were evaluated by peers to ensure

assigned responsibilities were carried out, fulfilled mandates associated with various portfolios, and lived up to the demands of each constituent group. Student leaders were expected to match or surpass personal, historical, or even organizational objectives.

Pressure from outside sources could also be problematic. An organization could have internal stresses demanding leaders live up to certain expectations, fulfill individual mandates, and meet objectives of the group. Sources outside the organization also brought certain demands. Expectations came from other groups, the general student population, overall student community, or sources outside the university. Demands from outside an organization originated from other student leaders and other students. Whatever the end result, the strain of meeting the demands of other individuals or groups followed student leaders during an entire leadership period.

Pressure brought expectations to perform and live up to a role of student leader created by other individuals. Harry commented:

> Another very difficult experience is telling about services, which is the reason why we're here, the Students Union, that they can't have as much money as they would like and having people coming to you with all these amazing, really good ideas to run their services but saying no, we can't do that this year.

One frustrating experience resulting from student leadership was created by individuals attempting to meet personal objectives, but also reacting to the demands of other individuals.

Isabelle summarized expectations from colleagues and ensuing pressures of leadership. The key points are noted in the following quote:

> There's pressure from permanent staff and other people--like other student leaders that you're working with--they're depending on you to do the job. There are other pressures surrounding being a student as well as being a person, I'm here for 12 months, how much am I going to put in? . . . My financial situation--can I afford to be here 12 hours a day and only pack one lunch and eat two meals out? Other demands come from the general student population, the one person who's pissed off at a professor who comes in here screaming and yelling. . . . Then there's another source of stress from your friends who are students who don't want to hear you bitch . . . . There are also strains of supporters who helped a student get elected as a student leader . . . . There is also the stress associated with ghosts you could say--people who've been in the position for the last 20 years. . . . Pressure

> also comes from trying to build relationships with university administrators and senior academics on campus. . . . A final anxiety stemmed from the role as the only woman on the executive. This place is the old boys club in a lot of respects. . .

Group Effectiveness

During group interviews, student leaders were also asked to comment on perceived group effectiveness as well as individual perceptions. All student leaders wished to be effective, to work well with other groups on campus, and to be productive for the sake of the student community. While real effectiveness may be difficult to measure, such a question gauged individual perceptions of productivity and impressions of efforts deemed meaningful.

Adam commented on group expectations set early:

> I think one of the things we do is what we talked about earlier--our executive retreat--our executive workshop where we sit down for a morning or a day and what we do is evaluate what we've accomplished on our list of priorities, we talk about what new priorities have come up that should be added, we talked about what once was a priority that just no longer is a priority relative to others and should be bumped, and we talk about for the next month or two months what our game plan is for achieving our success and then two months later we go back and say did we achieve everything we set out to do?

A planned, deliberate approach to work enabled students to establish objectives for the group and efforts to reach such aims. Bill, a member of the same group, had a more individualistic view of group effectiveness and added:

> You get one-on-one feedback from council or from people on your board, from friends, from people who don't particularly like what you do. You get feedback and it's that kind of feedback that I really value. You judge if you're actually having an effect or not.

To obtain individual feedback as a reasonable barometer of individual and group effectiveness, Frank added, "when you get negative feedback, sometimes it can amount to even more than three or four positive feedbacks. The negative one can set you back much farther. Let me rephrase that, it can motivate you."

Effectiveness could also be an individual perception and as Gerry mentioned, "it's

kind of nice to think that some students will be helped as a result of all they do and I think SU especially--the work that SU does, maybe it's not tangible necessarily but . . . ." Harry, with a less enthusiastic view of a group's effect on students, mentioned:

> . . . the majority of them [issues] dwindle into non-existence and they're not dealt with officially at all. Sometimes like those few times when you do get to do a few things, a feeling something has been righted and that's always a good thing. I have to be honest, that doesn't happen very often.

Gerry was concerned that, in the case of a specific group, effectiveness might not be achieved until members became comfortable with each another. He noted, "We've kind of gone through a bit of storming and dealt with things and moved forward. It's just too bad that it takes this long to get to the point of being effective."

Other students felt that spending too much time thinking or worrying about whether a group was effective could be very unproductive. Steve pointed to the fact:

> I don't think it's something I look at as are we being effective, are we accomplishing a lot, are we completing projects or anything like that. Are we winning battles? I think it more along the lines of are we maintaining a level of communication, are we maintaining a level of interaction and representation?

Such comments reflected on internal group effectiveness which appeared to be more important than contributions beyond a group. However, such a reaction may have been the nature of a particular group with representatives from various other groups on campus. Although students attended meetings with an idea of representing various constituencies, a collective will have enabled individual differences to be set aside and the group speak as a unified body. As Terry mentioned, "we can at least sit here, discuss the issue, perhaps be a unified body to support it if we need to, give information, access to different areas."

Finally, one of the fraternity groups was specific on perceived effectiveness relating to a popular activity at the beginning of the year. According to Olivia, the group was effective if, "we have a lot of girls come to Rush," an annual recruitment drive for new members. However, Paula added:

> I know that if we did a lot of work in Rush and then a lot of girls didn't come out, I was still going to be happy with what happened because I know that we put a lot

> of hours and just because the Chapters didn't back us up, if Rush failed, it would be on their heads. It wouldn't be on mine. So I thought not necessarily outcome but how we feel how effective we've been.

Effectiveness appeared to be guided as much by perceptions of individuals as group objectives and outcomes. On the one hand, if individuals felt that each member was working hard and collectively an effort was being made, the perception remained of a group's effectiveness, regardless of outcomes. Nevertheless, setting objectives at the beginning of a year, reviewing periodically individual and group activities, and finally accomplishing some or all projects produced satisfying, tangible results and demonstrated a degree of group performance.

Evolving Dynamics

Evolving dynamics was another issue pursued during group interviews. Paula pointed to tensions existing at the beginning making for a difficult work situation. As she mentioned, "at the very beginning we were all fighting over everything but now that we know each other, we can kind of talk, figure things out and work together." Getting to know each member appeared to be a key for quick, collaborative efforts. Patsy noted the progress made since the beginning of the year:

> It doesn't seem as personal--all the attacks now. Before, because you didn't really know each others' personalities as well, if somebody was saying something you could take it personally, whereas now we know what are other people's buttons and not to push them.

Thus a willingness and the time necessary to become acquainted on a personal basis affected the evolution of a group and unfolding dynamics among its members. Students became comfortable within a meeting setting as contributions were expected from each member. Steve added:

> I think now more than anything people are less hesitant to jump in when they have something to say--when something is burning in their head, they'll jump in and say it right away which I think is great. So no one keeps anything inside.

Ease among members also led to another observation by Terry:

> you tend to question less because you're just comfortable, you know that someone is going to handle it, work on it, or they've got it covered. In the beginning you're

pick apart their report and you pick apart every little thing whereas now it's okay.

Frank observed that a "settling in" period was important in relieving inhibitions among members and contributing to productive meetings. Some constraints came from individuals bringing varied experiences to a committee and making other members feel less informed and able to contribute. As he noted about a colleague bringing varied experiences from diverse roles on campus, "he already had a huge familiar background and history and he was able to bring things to the table and now, everybody here has good input and they know about their association. I think it's been a definite improvement that I see." Tom elaborated on the meeting just concluded, "Especially even today, we had some pretty serious issues come up and even though we didn't even formalize this meeting, instead of making a joke of everything, we just said, let's just get down to business." Having familiarity with other group members, through experiences gained and an understanding of personalities, enabled a group to differentiate between issues and deal with each problem accordingly. Individuals did not require any notice that a meeting would become more formal because of a pressing issue. Members knew each other, appreciated the seriousness of certain concerns, and were prepared to work accordingly.

Attribute and Skill Development

Participants were asked to highlight skills and attributes possessed by effective leaders. The following skills and attributes were mentioned most frequently.

Confidence. Participants mentioned the need for confidence in order to address any issue of concern to the student community as well as the confidence to deal with people both privately and publicly. More importantly as Steve added, "you've got to be confident that you can talk to anyone on campus and they're not going to be scared to come up to you and say hi. You want to be easy going and still fill the position." Melvin felt a tendency among leaders to be social creatures anyway but must be willing to, "learn it by interacting with people, going on a trip, living with them. If you are distant, you'll never get anything."

Effective communication. Respondents also mentioned the need to communicate with colleagues and people in general. Carl saw that, "it's important for somebody in that

position to be able to communicate effectively. I think it's a large responsibility to be able to identify with people's issues and listen to people's concerns." Frank was adamant, ". . . communication skills is number one without a doubt in my mind. Even if you don't know anything, if you can communicate that you don't know anything, you get respect of some people . . . ." Bill pointed to the importance of, "communication being two-way communication so both are able to listen, hear, understand, and then present your own ideas but also group ideas."

Effective listening. Students also deemed effective listening as very valuable in leadership. Harry mentioned that the importance of listening and "try to evaluate everybody's opinion for what it is and try to figure out the motivations behind these opinions." Verne commented on the need, "to be able to listen to what they're saying. You can't be running a dictatorship or have total autonomy over what's going on because the effectiveness of the group just isn't there." Tom added:

> . . . just listening to someone whether it takes five minutes or ten minutes and actually listening to what they mean, not necessarily just what they're saying, but what are they meaning behind what they're saying? Are they asking for help but just not asking for it, do they just want to vent and letting them vent is sometimes a wonderful thing to do.

Still Terry echoed the need to go beyond simply listening:

> and listen to people's concerns. To really be able to understand what somebody is trying to get to you, a lot of what they is not through their words but through their actions. To be able to understand what people are saying.

Thus listening became more than simply hearing people or views presented. Motives behind various assertions were also being considered.

Good organizational skills. Many student leaders felt that having good organizational skills contributed to good leadership and enabled credibility to be gained with peers. As Patsy indicated:

> One is organization by far because tasks and duties that you take on when you're in that kind or position demands a lot of time and a lot of responsibility. In order to execute those tasks properly, you have to be really organized.

Paula felt that good leaders should be organized on both fronts, "you have to be organized

when you're in your role as well you have to be organized in your personal life because they both intertwined."

Willingness to work. Participants pointed to a willingness to work as essential and having an effect on leadership success as well as perceptions of leadership effectiveness by other members. Patsy highlighted dedication with the following example:

> say it's 2:00 in the morning, someone needs a hand whether it be getting a poster out for the following morning and nobody else can do it, they're there. As a friend to talk or being accessible, just being there.

Managing time. Verne summarized a required and important skill for any leader as he called it, "the ability to effectively manage time, activities, and people involved in whatever activity might be going on so there's minimal wasted time and resources and there's some logical coherence to the steps you're taking." While reflecting overall organization, managing one's time allowed tasks to be accomplished, other members guided to organizational objectives, and finally to grasp necessary resources for overall effectiveness.

Undesirable Habits

Participants were also asked to comment on perceived undesirable habits observed in other leaders, practices to avoid when called upon to assume leadership positions.

Trying to do too much. Many students commented on attempts by leaders to try accomplishing too much, failing to delegate sufficiently, and not trusting other members to do assigned duties. As Olivia cautioned, "You can't unless it's so small, but a lot of times you can't do it all and having that trust when people might call."

Becoming self absorbed. Other students discussed an error of many young leaders once involved in leadership. Participants referred to having a "big head," other students called the practice "domineering," and other students mentioned being "tyrannical." Terry suggested:

> Everyone wants to be part of a team and so as long as they feel they've got input into whoever they're following, then they're going to be happy and probably will be a more effective worker. So a good leader should probably be open to ideas

and not just it's my way or the highway.

All words described leaders becoming so self absorbed, caught up in personal and professional activities of leadership that other members were disregarded, advice was dismissed, and supporters were ignored. Leaders attended only to personal problems, failed to rely on skills that helped in past successes, or did not listen to supporters or friends.

Summary

Two research questions were examined in this chapter. In the first question, participants responded to experiences helping to mould leadership behaviour. Findings revealed that:

1. The community was very influential in setting the stage for initial involvement in several community activities and providing introductory experiences in leadership.

1.1 The school, its social network, and co-curricular activities provided a safe, secure environment for students to begin participation, provide confidence, and develop a necessary support structure.

1.2 Experimentation with a variety of activities was encouraged by students as well as initial efforts at leadership. Activities such as Girl Guides, Air Cadets, and the YMCA proved to be very positive influences for students participating in their home communities.

1.3 Organized sports continued to be affirmative environments for young people attempting to develop confidence and skills in preparing for other avenues of involvement.

1.4 Experiences gained while in a formal work setting also proved beneficial as students acquired interpersonal and leadership skills. The work place also provided opportunities to observe behaviour of colleagues and supervisors worthy of emulation as well as inappropriate behaviour.

2. Experiences gained at university became the next most influential environment for students having moved away from home and seeking a milieu for continued involvement.

2.1 Student residences, homes away from home for many students, provided a

supportive milieu for students to participate in activities and later into leadership.

2.2 Fraternities and its social networks also became important for new students in order to make friends and provided a supportive environment for participation and leadership.

2.3 Many out-of-class experiences and volunteer activities proved beneficial for students seeking to become involved, making friends, and providing interests beyond academics.

3. Many individuals played key roles in getting students involved initially in communities and promoting involvement.

3.1 Among community influences were parents, siblings, teachers, coaches, and former supervisors at work.

3.2 At university, key supporters were colleagues within each student organization, university professors and administrators, friends and significant others.

3.3 Parents continued to be strong influences despite the distance separating them from students.

3.4 Students identified both role models and mentors providing guidance, support, and being very influential.

4. Past experiences were beneficial in helping student leaders work with people, gain experience, and acquire self-confidence to continue involvement and leadership activities into the future.

5. Most experiences had both positive and negative aspects providing much learning for students.

5.1 Among positive attributes associated with leadership were the development of the following: communication, organization, delegation, and conflict resolution skills, freedom of task initiation and completion, helping others, obtaining appreciation from others, working as a team, developing skills and contacts for the future, and social relationships.

5.2 Among negative facets of leadership were: disciplining colleagues, time commitments, effects on academics and social relationships, and the inability to enjoy the

experience of leadership.

In a second research question, leadership conduct was assessed as a result of observing roles and responsibilities during meetings. Students were asked their perceptions of various duties as student leaders, role assessments by colleagues, as well as other members of the student and university communities. From the study:

1. A degree of formality and informality provided order, direction, and ensured meetings were productive and tasks accomplished.

1.1 Informality provided a lighter mood, avoided boredom, and guarded against a degree of rigidity among members.

1.2 Meetings oscillated between formality and informality to control against rising tensions and to ensure meetings remained productive. Initial meetings of each committee were more formal but became informal as members became familiar with each other.

2. Consensus was the main decision making process as agreement was sought from all members.

2.1 Input from all members was expected and valued.

2.2 Conflict arose periodically but was confined to issues rather than personalities.

3. Role modelling was recognized as a key component of any leadership behaviour.

4. Students identified and accepted various pressures associated with leadership.

5. Effectiveness was perceived differently by various students and combined both individual achievements as well as organizational successes.

6. Students distinguished both skills and attributes as well as limitations associated with leadership.

6.1 Listening was recognized as a key skill among all leaders.

6.2 Trying to do too much, failure to delegate, and improper role modelling were perceived as weaknesses among leaders.

7. During meetings, various members played different informal roles based on situations and experiences. Roles included: motivator, facilitator, mediator, moderator, advisor,

watchdog, worker, and schmoozer.

7.1 The President may choose one or several formal or informal roles during meetings associated with the role of the President as well as a member of an organization.

CHAPTER 6

BENEFITS DERIVED FROM LEADERSHIP INVOLVEMENT

This chapter presents findings with respect to students' perceptions of major benefits and learning derived from involvement in university leadership activities. Information was collected from personal interviews with student leaders from the five student groups as well as group interviews following regularly scheduled meetings.

Specific Research Question No. 3

Which Major Benefits do Students Gain From Involvement in Formal Leadership Activities?

Positive Outcomes From Leadership

Participants were asked to identify positive results from leadership experiences. While perceived by many student leaders as skill improvement and development, many of the items identified related to overall attributes or traits associated with leadership. Certain abilities were new and directly related to past leadership experiences as well as current involvement in student leadership at university. Other student leaders refined or upgraded aptitudes as a result of "moving up the leadership ladder" and assuming increasing positions of responsibility within groups. In all cases, students who were given an opportunity or sought greater leadership responsibilities recognized new abilities in themselves or improved existing competencies.

Public speaking. Student leaders were pleased with improvements in public speaking. Increased responsibilities meant greater interaction with a larger number of people and additional communication with a diverse group. Dealing with people and confronting difficult individuals enabled students to gain more expertise than imagined. Respondents commented that their public speaking abilities had improved dramatically due to exposure to various leadership roles. Carl commented on the difficulty and importance of public speaking as a skill by adding:

> What I've realized is that it is a very difficult thing to do and it's still something I need to work on. I still need to improve that skill. That's a skill that is very important thing for me as a human being to be able to communicate to anybody effectively. If I'm in a position where I have to be dealing with a large spectrum

> of people--different types of people--then it's to my advantage to be able to communicate to those people efficiently.

Terry added that outside of leadership situations:

> I seem to be shy in those situations but in my role as a leader, I have no problems. I can speak in front of 30,000 people if you asked me to. It wouldn't even bother me. And that surprises me because in high school I was the shy guy who hated public speaking.

Self confidence. Student leaders in the study were also pleased with a newly acquired ability to get up in front of a group of peers and express different views on an issue. Melvin noted, "I'm not scared to stand in front of a group of 500 people and talk off the top of my head and three years ago I know I was petrified to do that." Acquired self-confidence was directly related to experiences gained through involvement in leadership as well as other activities. Many participants confirmed benefits acquired through watching other leaders and personal leadership involvement increased self confidence. Steve pointed to the level of assurance gained and the ability to tackle different responsibilities:

> I know I can do these things. I know I can express ideas and lead a group and help them with problems and concerns they have and that's just given me a lot of confidence that I can work well with people and that people can look up to me if they need help.

Steve also commented on increased confidence in meeting with people to address concerns or issues and pointed to, "the ability to speak with people and propose different ideas. Self reliance to be able to take on a task and know that I can complete it or not complete it." Bill added about gains in:

> confidence and feeling better about myself in that I have a chance to make a difference or do something different and that also makes me feel proud, not so much in the glory sense that people know my name, but I know what I'm doing, so there's pride in that.

Julia reflected on the influence of past experiences on self-confidence by relaying that:

> I'm more pleased. Like they say hindsight is '20/20' vision and I'm big on introspection for my own personal life and as I look back, I should not be surprised at where I'm heading to now. When I think of all the different

> influences in my life and how each step has made me learn something different and the confidence that comes from it.

Organizational skills. Another related skill identified by student leaders was the ability to organize oneself and colleagues so a group could carry out its work and meet its objectives. Being organized required more than preparing for work and planning activities. Thought was also given to colleagues' assignments and strengths of particular individuals. Unforeseen circumstances and contingency situations were reported as important to be considered. Paula parallelled improved organizational abilities to increases in professionalism within the group and commented:

> Professionalism basically is that at all times you maintain a certain dignity or a certain decorum in everything that you do and all personal relations should be very professional. I don't mean cold and impersonal, I'd say it's like an attitude almost. not a snotty attitude, but not a really kind of down attitude. It's a professional attitude, it can help you in all aspects of your life and on jobs or opportunities you might be presented with. It helps you with maintaining your organization, maintaining your focus.

Verne recognized how difficult organizing people could be by sharing that:

> One thing I really learned is trying to get a group of people to come together in a common goal is more difficult that I thought. I think that case is true a lot more with IFC than say my own fraternity, even though my fraternity is sometimes the same thing. But there might be a goal that the group says yeah, we want to do this, but actually getting everyone to come together to get it done just is never as easy as it seems. I always figured that once you have the goal defined and we want to do this, that people would want to work towards it and get it done. But it just doesn't always happen that way.

Similarly Ernie noted about personal improvement of organizational skills in relation to other individuals within a group with the following comment:

> Everyone has to have some confidence to do things and I think that's when there has been positive things that have come back. It is this combination that makes you realize that you are a little more confident and you can continue to improve your organizational skills. Again, partly it's not just helping others improve but improving yourself and that's always one thing I want to do.

Connecting personally and professionally. Other student leaders identified unforseen advantages of leadership through acquired personal and career contacts. For

the majority, initial involvement in an activity and leadership were sufficiently motivating. However, student leadership situations, particularly at the university level allowed students to meet peers from various backgrounds and make valuable personal and career connections for the present as well as later in life. As Gerry commented:

> it's also given me more contacts in the world. Just getting to know people is more or less the most positive one that I can think of. I knew the contacts were there but that wasn't the reason for getting the position that I have.

Leadership created opportunities but students did not move into such positions for self-serving purposes. However, Terry was not ashamed of a primary reason for leadership involvement:

> Socially I meet new people that I probably would have never had the opportunity before. That in itself is probably one of the main reasons I'm in student leadership is to meet some really dynamic, really in-depth people that I would have never met before. It's definitely given me insight to what to expect in the future.

Working hard. Respondents also noted the inherent value of hard work as part of leadership. Participants appreciated the amount of work required in becoming leader of an organization or member of an executive committee. In leadership positions at a university level, a leader was likely to be asked to or did the most work on behalf of the organization. Such a reality was not perceived as a flaw or an inability to delegate effectively. As a result of watching leaders or being in positions of leadership, a large number of duties were assumed while additional responsibilities arose from membership on external committees. Student leaders recognized that carrying the workload of leadership contributed to success as much as all other aspects of skill development. Rachel summed up the feelings of many student leaders by stating that:

> . . . you have to do the work. To be the leader of the group, you almost have to always do the most work. I sort of look at is there's a few people who can get away with being a leader without doing any work or doing the work. I'm not one of those people. You have to be very lucky--that's the person who's totally charismatic. That leader has to make sure that he or she knows everything about what's going on in the organization, is absolutely on top of things, the president or chairman depending on the structure has to be the one who knows the most, has to be the one who does the most work, and that's something that I've always learned.

Inter-dependency on others. Another skill reported by students was dependency or support of other members. Paula commented that, "I'm a very independent person and I try never to really depend on anyone for much. I always try to get everything done myself. At times that can be really good other times it can be kind of a downfall." Dependence in leadership was being awakened in students as part of the leadership experience. Terry noted definite advantages of depending on other members by stating that:

> I've become a lot more open to different ideas, different people, people I wouldn't have necessarily considered before or even have had the opportunity to meet before. And it's provided a good network for synthesizing the best possible way to get something done that I wouldn't have come up before.

Limitations. Appreciating leadership limits and the need and willingness to delegate when necessary were also highlighted by respondents. Paula learned a positive aspect of leadership when she shared that, "It's good to the extent where you don't take on too much and aren't able to delegate to other people or ask for help." Julia also accentuated the importance of knowing limitations and seeking the support of colleagues by commenting that:

> If I come to a meeting and I don't know a topic, I'm more than willing to say look, I don't know the issue here, I'm willing to investigate on it or whoever would like to take on that role of getting more information. I think it would be foolish to assume that you know everything because you're a student leader and I guess that would be what I would call in some sense humiliation, a healthy sense of humiliation and humiliation may not be a negative thing.

Personal and professional objectives. Students in the study recognized a personal and professional awakening as a result of leadership. Melvin pointed to:

> being organized, knowing where my priorities are in terms of my life, and also it's given me a real sense of vision as to what I want to be doing as a career and the place that I want my life to be heading.

Leadership provided opportunities and often identified both personal and professional objectives. As Bill summarized:

> . . . if I was hired to do a job, I wouldn't have the opportunities for leadership in the same way and therefore I wouldn't have grown and developed. I know it's the

> kind of experience which makes a difference with careers, progressing, and having a better understanding of what I like to do and what I am capable of doing. So I know it will help me in my career.

Maturity. Respondents also remarked positively on gains in maturity as a result of leadership and its benefits to personal endeavours. Paula commented that:

> It's matured me very quickly. I don't know if that's wholly good, but it's helped my life. It's definitely developed my skills that I can take out into the real world. It's also helped me feel good about myself because I've made a difference even in a miniscule way.

Harry felt that maturity brought an appreciation:

> . . . that I have a great deal to learn. Every time I open a door it leads to another couple of doors. It's a mixture and I have a great deal to learn but there's unlimited opportunity if you go through. It's a self assurance that the world has no limits and yet it's the presence and perspective that it's one thing at a time and it's necessary in order to grow.

New possibilities. New possibilities were identified by students as a result of leadership. Steve commented on a new openness:

> It's opened my eyes to a lot of different opportunities and people that exist out there. I have a lot of good ideas but so do a lot of other people and the more people you know, the more ideas you're likely to get and then choose the best option. So I think the biggest thing it's brought to me is that I've become a lot more open to different ideas, different people, people I wouldn't have necessarily considered before or even have the opportunity to meet before.

Self perception and trust. Students in the study also acknowledged an increased self perception brought upon by leadership. Gains in self confidence were acknowledged, but many students also confirmed that leadership also boosted self perception by group members. Students noted that confidence gained from leadership was attributed to the trust members placed in leaders and continued to have as greater successes were achieved. Confidence of peers and colleagues provided ammunition for leaders to live up to expectations yet placed greater demands. Gerry relished the open nature of student leadership by adding:

> . . . students are good people and smart people to be involved with. You can sit

> down with a students' council and provide a rational argument and people will say okay, I understand, that makes sense. We have such an open approach that you're right until I prove you wrong. I don't think any other politician can really say most of his constituents are very open minded and will listen to reason.

A social network. Students in the study regarded opportunities to enjoy time with group members as important. Such groups became social networks and spending time elsewhere was unlikely. Enjoyment came from interacting with colleagues and taking part in group activities even away from leadership responsibilities. A social group has been formed and a desire remained to be part of the group, participate in group activities, and join other members in social events. Frank emphasized that, "the people inside this room and it's not just the five of us, it's those two over there too. It's the friendships, you get attached to a lot of people that you work with."

Negative Aspects of Leadership

Physical and emotional demands. Students in the study also discussed challenges of leadership. One negative effect was the physical toll that leadership took on the individual. Carl referred to, "Burn out. That's why I left my last job. I was physically exhausted and I think it was because of my drive to do things and always work for people and maybe to the detriment of my own health." Physical demands of leadership were evident but could be countered with proper rest, diet, and exercise. However, emotional stress was less noticeable as leaders were asked to make decisions affecting individuals and organizations. As Olivia mentioned:

> Being exposed emotionally to everything because you put your heart and your soul into everything, every project and if it doesn't go off as well as it should, it really disappointing and it takes time too . . . or at least until the next project goes off really well to be able to get yourself back up to that level.

Senior leaders of various student organizations sat on committees and were privy to information affecting lives of several hundred or several thousand students. However, students were not always pleased with a position taken and would vent disapproval in various ways. Regarding emotional demands of leadership, Ernie added:

> I really like to please other people. I really like to make them happy which is why I'm doing this and then it's a tough balance. Where does other people's happiness

> and your happiness and where do you draw the line? The negative effects of leadership is that you're not going to please everybody and my personality type is that I don't like having people upset with me. It bugs me.

Stress. Students in the study also reacted negatively to the stress of leadership as influenced by internal pressures of the organization. Terry commented that:

> . . . anything you're involved in, you're not only representing IFC, you're representing your chapter too and I have to say that if you do something on IFC that someone doesn't agree with, they're going to turn around and hate your chapter. You're still projecting an image of everyone within your chapter and you have to keep that in mind.

Effective leadership was often an issue of leaders' abilities to handle pressures and still perform as expected.

Popular and unpopular activities. Another negative effect recognized by student leaders was juggling enjoyable and less pleasant activities. Bill accepted that:

> So you try to find what you like to do best and you realize within this field there are certain things you have to deal with and some you can ignore. Then you can move and go do something else which will not have those [unpleasant activities]. You also recognize the things you don't like to do because you're doing more of the enjoyable activities.

Leaders appreciated that activities required certain skills and a leadership mandate combined enjoyable and less amusing events. High and lows were accepted and leaders appreciated the need to complete both.

Time demands. Students also noted that leadership was very time consuming and time restrictive. Both leadership and academic performance were affected and constrained by available time. Kevin noted:

> Time is really a very important factor right now. A lot of other things are on the go and as much as I like it, I don't like it because I don't have as much time to do some of the other things in life. For once I actually feel bad that I'm not putting as much time into my research as I should be.

Adam commented about the leadership role assumed, "Really time consuming. Especially here which we don't have a lot of organized things and trying to build it from almost zero so it takes a lot of time." Time became a factor in demands of duties,

responsibilities of leadership, as well as time away from other activities.

Students in the study commented that time constraints impacted negatively on the enjoyment of leadership. Unfortunately, leadership was often so demanding that the experience could not be appreciated fully. A leader was unable to reflect on the experience, examine its benefits, and acknowledge its rewards. Verne reflected on time demands of leadership and chagrined, "Time and you never enjoy it sometimes because you have to do a lot of work, you don't have time to rest or enjoy your life."

Relationships. Students reported that conflicts with time also affected other individuals. Relationships with family and friends were strained as a leader was not devoting sufficient time or was unprepared to give quality time to people in order to maintain relationships. Tom mentioned that:

> . . . the amount of time leadership often requires cuts into some social activities that I would like to have gotten involved in possibly--athletic endeavours. It cuts down on my free time for anything, even so much as spending time with my family in that if you wish to get involved in a leadership role, it's going to command some time of you and you got to be willing to forego some other things.

Academic performance. Another negative of leadership identified by students was time away from academic study. While social and recreational time would be sacrificed as well, absences from classroom, incomplete assignments, and other unfinished academic commitments also became part of a leader's schedule. Time devoted to leadership influenced academic success. Terry noted, "Sometimes I've seen my GPA drop quite a bit because there are times when you have so many demands on you and again, it comes back to being able to say no to some things." However Donna looked at academic success beyond high marks as other activities and experiences contributed as much to learning as course work or a diploma at the completion of her university career. She noted:

> I guess in some people's eyes it's harder to get the 9's but I think I saw early on that I didn't need to have the top marks, that when I came out with my piece of paper, in most cases they're not going to look at what my grades are. I had to have a certain minimal level if I wanted to go on to do further school, but beyond that . . . .

Wanting to lead. Another negative concern about leadership as noted by respondents was a desire to take a leadership role in most situations. Paula commented, "I get concerned sometimes that I'm doing this just to be at the head of the group, I'm looking for power. I don't really think that's true, but it's just a perception, hopefully a wild perception." Whether a true reflection or simply a sense, leadership encouraged even greater leadership and power which proved difficult to relinquish. Holding on to status, authority, and power associated with leadership positions created a comfortable environment that many individuals found difficult to abandon. Olivia added that abdicating power was never easy, "I'm learning. I'm still working on that one. I think it's bad when you take it and you go on power trips with it. Taking control and being in control to ensure all bases are covered."

Lacking anonymity. Some students identified a lack of anonymity as a negative of leadership. While appreciating recognition in certain situations, Steve noted:

> My girlfriend was in town last weekend and we were walking through HUB Mall and I think about 10 or 15 different people just said Hey, how are you doing? She was surprised that I knew so many people and I knew maybe three quarters of them. Sometimes you don't want to be visible.

While increased notoriety was an on-going issue, leaders regulated visibility to specific situations. As Tom commented:

> I go to school as me because when I'm in class, there's a few IFC members in my class, but I don't talk to them about IFC matters and if they start talking about IFC in school, I try to say well, leave me alone, talk to me after class. When I'm in school or in class, I'm not the president.

Although such demarcation would be useful for leaders, rare were situations where leaders were given the freedom to regulate their identity.

Specific Research Question No. 4

What Significant Learning Takes Place From Involvement in Formal Student Leadership Activities?

Students mentioned a variety of factors and skills that were learned at a result of leadership experiences. Good communication, ability to deal with conflict, and skills

involved in dealing with people from diverse backgrounds were among the most significant learnings.

Communication Skills

Students remarked that exposure to leadership introduced a variety of skills needed for success. One example was the ability to communicate effectively. Various circumstances invited a leader to share thoughts, communicate sentiments, and describe clearly for a small or a large group the acceptance of a particular perspective. Individuals were able to bring thoughts to words and were effective in making colleagues understand a particular viewpoint. Gerry elaborated on improved communication as a result of leadership by accentuating:

> . . . being able to make a point because everybody in this room is very busy. We don't have time to sit here for two and a half or three hours two times a week to talk about issues and to really rehash certain topics. So I think everybody in this room has gotten very good at quickly making their points, quickly getting to the major, most important points of an issue and leaving the fluff and everything else behind.

Carl noted:

> I always thought I had a fair, a decent ability to communicate effectively or at least to be able to get something across to them whether I'm talking to someone in a tuxedo or whether it's someone who's peddling for money on the streets. I kind of see myself as being able to at least put the effort into trying to communicate. What I've realized is that it is a very difficult thing to do and it's still something that I need to work on. That's a skill that I feel is very important for me as a human being to be able to communicate to anybody effectively.

Carl also added the importance of communicating with people in a context most familiar to the individuals.

Beyond speaking effectively, students also accentuated the value of developing good listening skills. An understanding was developed of the role taken as well as the people being served. Harry advised, ". . . make sure you listen, don't talk too much and don't get a big head", while Bill cautioned to, "listen to people, you always have to remind yourself where you're leading, you call yourself a leader, what are you leading? Are you leading ants to their demise or are you leading people?" Kevin noted:

> It's one of the things that may help you get more experience, when you listen to other peoples' ideas, you may get new ones, maybe you'll get more experience in how to deal with the problem and also you have to know every human perspective like a side of a wall with different windows. . . .

Larry perceived listening as a stage that student leaders were likely to go through and came with increased maturity in a leadership role. He pointed that:

> I starting to come down from the ego stage. I still jump in a lot, I still think I have a lot to say on everything and I'm learning about sitting back and letting it go on, waiting to see if somebody else will bring up the point I was going to bring up. So I think I've learned a lot about listening.

Finally Verne concluded that:

> . . . you have to be willing to listen and willing to accept a variety of opinions and ideas and that your ideas are not always going to get through, which is good. You don't want to be a dictatorship. The idea is to get group consensus as much as possible. So be willing to listen to other ideas and incorporate various parts of what someone is saying into your own idea and hopefully come out with the best solution for the group.

Support From Colleagues

Students also recognized the necessity of gaining assistance from co-workers. To gain such support, Frank suggested:

> . . . good leaders are friendly. I think that's always been a cultural mores that personable people get into leadership positions, but I really think that to lead a group of people you need to be sensitive and friendly and really care about the people you're in charge of . . .

Gerry noted an assortment of other factors influential in getting aid such as:

> enthusiasm and energy and temperament. It's something that you're not born with, you really just have to gauge the circumstances and determine whether you're going to be very calm and rational in a situation or whether that's the time you're going to lose your cool and spout off.

Harry was adamant that gaining support came from:

> Confidence. I think it is an important skill--not cockiness but confidence. I think people only really look up to a leader or respect a leader or will follow a leader if the leader is confident in the job that they're doing and exudes that confidence to

the point where people feel confident following in their footsteps.

But Isabelle pointed that gaining such encouragement comes from:

> . . . being sincere, being genuine, and listening to people so as to grasp what other people are feeling or what they're saying. Clearing that up, defining it, and passing it on or picking up what's really critical out of those points and encouraging that.

Remembering the Experience

Students involved in the study also identified that leadership was an experience to be remembered regardless of the stress involved. Tom, impressed by all activities surrounding leadership particularly student leadership at the university level, described it, "It's an experience. I would just categorize it as being an experience, shocking for many realistically speaking, situations which under normal circumstances if you read something in the paper, you would say, What nonsense is this?" Terry confirmed the value of leadership by accentuating that, "it's given me experience so it's meant the opportunity to gain experience that I'm probably going to use for a long time in anything I do, whether it be at work or other activities I might be doing later on in life." Kevin was more philosophical in affirming the importance of the leadership experience:

> I think it's your obligation to society. You always have to serve people and one of the aspects you can serve is by being a leader in your society and help the people to serve them. As educated people, you believe that most changes come from the top, if you can make changes at the top, you will affect the people further down.

Willingness to Work

Students also responded that success in leadership was also tied to the ability and willingness to work. Harry noted that, ". . . you get in the position and realize that if you really want to contribute and be effective, you have to put in more time and you have to put in more mental energy." Gerry confirmed the need to work by stating:

> I'm very much a hands-on person. I like to be involved. If the VP's are working 60 hours a week then I'd like to work 70. I want to put in the most time, I'm a perfectionist so I want to do the job 100%--as perfect as it could possibly be and in some cases that requires time, effort, and energy.

Essentially a commitment was required, one which Ernie pointed out to prospective students interested in leadership:

> . . . they need to be committed, they need to know they want to do the job. There's a difference between wanting the job and wanting the title and I've seen people in those positions who are there just for the title and don't put the time and effort in and it shows and people get frustrated. So I tell people that they really need to show commitment, they need to be willing to put the time and effort in . . .

Although hard work and commitment will win many supporters and gain much respect, Adam pointed to the assistance of charisma, "because you have to have people willing to follow you and to accept your ideas without having to head butt with them the whole way through."

Sacrifices

Students also identified a leader's willingness to make necessary sacrifices to influence colleagues, ensured members would follow, and made quality decisions on behalf of an organization. Adam pointed to personal sacrifices of leaders on university committees where, "If you're on a committee that's making major decisions or recommendations for a major institution, the magnitude sort of gives it reverence and makes it just more serious, more thought goes into it . . . ." Through such devotion, a leader gained needed respect to be effective, acquired support to function in a leadership capacity, and had the approval of members. In addition, sacrifices must be repeated if support was to be maintained. Frank remarked that sacrifice:

> makes you realize that you get nothing period. You can never get something for nothing. It's not as much something for something, you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours. It's not bad, it just seems that if you want to get somewhere you have to do something to do it and the greater degrees of achievement require greater degrees of sacrifice.

Balance

Students reported that leadership also required striking a balance between the personal and professional, between the person and the leader, between requirements of student and demands of leadership. Adam noted:

> Balance is the key because it's easy to get caught up spending time doing what

> you want to be doing in your leadership role, but you can't stay in the role unless you are able to manage both parts of your life--your academic life and your student leader life. If you aren't able to do that, then your leadership life is going to suffer when it comes to the crunch time of your school responsibilities. You have to be on top enough so that you can still deal with the crises that come up in the leadership role.

Maintaining that equilibrium was not easy as Bill pointed out, "I think initially I was quite frustrated and feeling kind of mismatched, maybe overloaded but since I've arranged my class schedule in September, it seems to work out really well."

Donna described how leadership allowed control to be gained over components needed for success as a person and as a leader. As she commented:

> In each of the roles, you have to figure out what is the balance that's required. Over time as an advisor, I probably got a better balance. I think that maybe it's a reflection of my personality. I've always been fairly balanced, I've always known if I was on top of things enough, I wouldn't be frustrated.

Leadership obligated Donna to maintain a balance with other aspects of her life.

Self Fulfilment

Self fulfilment was also regarded by students as a vital learning from leadership activity. Olivia commented, "Being fulfilled, knowing that you're doing exactly what you want to do. If you're not doing that, you're not doing the people that you work with any justice or any good. You have to be in touch." Julia referred to leadership as:

> I really feel alive when I can do this. I love to challenge myself. When I can see that I'm contributing to the community, when I can see that I'm actually getting some productivity out of this, when I can get good feedback personally and recognizing the work and the effort that I've put in, it really makes me feel like I'm doing something.

A leader's accomplishments were important, first of all to the leader and to other members of the organization as well. Leadership was viewed as fulfilling when completing necessary accomplishments, making a contribution, and achieving set objectives. Personal sacrifice was rewarded when actions were recognized. Harry added that leadership meant:

> Feeling fulfilled, knowing that you're doing exactly what you want to do. If

> you're not doing that, you're not doing the people that you work with any justice or any good. You have to be in touch and in order to do that you have to want to be in touch.

Challenge of Leadership

Students also reported on the on-going challenge of leadership. Carl, in describing university leadership noted:

> . . . this big blob, it just kind of wobbles and rolls along, minding its own business and crushing people in its path. Every so often you get some people inside the blob pushing in certain directions, trying to force the blob to go in a certain direction and I can see myself as one of those people trying to pound away, trying to create some sort of change of direction for this big bureaucratic bulldozer. But I'm becoming more and more aware of those very knowledgeable, motivated individuals who have the power and the ability to be able to change the direction of the university.

Carl's view of student leadership was that of constant movement, rolling along impervious to the influx of new people and new ideas, less likely to be influenced by new forces, and unwilling to adapt or accommodate change.

Learning

Respondents also acknowledged that much learning came from leadership. Gerry noted:

> I think it's a continual learning curve. I think when you're in high school you don't realize how many hours outside of class you're going to put into the job [leadership] in order to do it properly. Then you make the transition to university and you don't figure it's going to be that much more time consuming and mentally tiring than high school. But as you begin to get involved, you realize that it is and you make the jump from being involved in clubs and council to being on the executive. It's another jump up and if you really want to contribute and be effective, you have to put in more time and more mental energy. It's just a continual learning.

Isabelle cautioned that the process was often just as important as the final product and added that:

> . . . you realize after the fact that what you learned was in the process. That's one thing that becomes very clear is you need a product, but it's just as important to make sure that the process was consistent, thorough, and involved as many people as it could. It's a tricky balance because you've only got 12 months to show

> everybody what you can do. The process is going to have more impact on the people than the product.

Leadership was also about learning and the on-going acquisition of knowledge. As Paula identified:

> I've learned an enormous amount about myself, that I've learned where I need to challenge myself and where my limits are. It's meant that I've learned a lot about human nature, a lot about the skills that I have and need to work on. It's given me something to work towards--just in general, in life.

Both quantity and quality of time were deemed important. In addition, getting acquainted with all facets of an organization was also necessary. Olivia recommended:

> Get to know everything you can possibly know about what you're getting into so that you know what you're talking about. Once you've got that position generally again, you should still continue to learn and discover what you're in by talking to people, listening, and reading.

Role Modelling

Kevin was adamant that role modelling was a key component of leadership. "I really think that leadership by example is the absolute. Probably the most fundamental key to success as a leader at least in terms of inspiring people around you is leadership by example." Verne added:

> . . . a leader has to live by what they say. There can't be a double standard that exists. If a leader is going to be involved in making decisions that are going to affect the group, then the leader has to abide by those decisions as well. It can't be two different sectors of people because the group is going to follow the leader to some extent and if the leader isn't leading by example, then the group can become fragmented and can lose its direction very quickly.

Familiarity with various roles and duties demonstrated the significance of individuals to a group and the collective process. However, doing too much was also regarded with concern. Donna cautioned about, ". . . doing it all. You can't unless it's so small, but a lot of times you can't do it all and you have to trust other people, to delegate when people might call." Olivia added, "A good leader shouldn't do all the work. It should be passed around among everyone, not spread overly thin but so that everyone contributes. A leader isn't the sole proprietor of a project." Colleagues were allowed to

gain experiences, work on existing skills, or develop new abilities. Ernie also clarified an equally important and sometimes forgotten aspect of role modelling, "I'd say I came into the job because of a personality trait. I felt I knew what my behaviour should be. I wouldn't say that's something that I've necessarily witnessed from the people who were in these positions before me." Appropriate role modelling often combined personality traits brought into leadership as well as assessments by peers.

Open-Mindedness

Students also applauded the open-mindedness of leadership at the university level. Tom recommended to, ". . . keep an open mind to those around you and those you represent because if you don't, then you're no longer a representative, you're just sitting on that council." According to Verne, such openness can be attributed to:

> . . . the amount of diversity one encounters in that students come from all types of backgrounds, thoughts, and ideas on basically everything and as a leader you've got to be understanding of that diversity and try to incorporate that into the way you lead a group of people or even speak to that group of people . . . .

Survival

Larry took a very philosophical approach about leadership and commented about his role as a leader:

> Probably that nothing's irreparable. What's the worst that can happen if it doesn't work the way I want it to, it doesn't mean anything. It means that you just have to do it again or you have to change what you tried. The learning, that's been huge. It's in every leadership position, if it's not working or it didn't work, it's not the end of the world. You just have to adjust, you just have to change and I think the adaptability that you pick up as a leader is just invaluable. Just the flexibility to see what the problem is and fix it.

Leadership was flexible and adaptable to various situations and boded well for its resiliency. Student leaders learned to adjust with the demands of the position and with various issues arising. Regardless of new university officials or new administrative policies, student leaders learned to bend with the circumstances and adjust to new conditions of leadership. Student leaders identified the need for resilience yet persistence in their endeavours to bring about change.

Relationships

Finally, Patsy commented on the experience of leadership and learning the value of relationships and friendships cultivated over the years:

> Probably the value of friendship. I've met, through my desire to become involved, a lot of people who have become very important in my life or through that, their significance in my life has changed. And I think that's probably one of the best parts about being involved in student leadership, the friendships that you make.

Many student leaders acknowledged the camaraderie which emerged as a result of leadership involvement and friendships created, some of which would last a lifetime. Student leaders had been changed as a result of leadership, but most significantly by individuals encountered as a result of these experiences.

Summary

Student leaders elaborated on the outcomes and learnings that happened as a result of leadership involvement. The following findings emerged from the study:

1. Students recognized both positive and negative outcomes associated with involvement in leadership activities.

1.1 Developing public speaking skills.

1.2 Gaining self confidence.

1.3 Developing good organizational skills.

1.4 Acquiring and maintaining personal and professional contacts for the future.

1.5 Recognizing the value of hard work allowed students to attain personal fulfilment and organizational objectives.

1.6 Depending on other members ensured more involvement and greater support.

1.7 Knowing the limits of abilities allowed students to determine what could be achieved.

1.8 Planning and visioning ensured personal objectives and organizational goals were met.

1.9 Recognizing an avenue for professional growth and maturity.

1.10 Opening both personal and professional possibilities.

1.11 Gaining in self perception and trust.

1.12 Increasing social network.

2. Leadership and its activities could be physically and emotionally demanding on individuals. The following pressures were noted:

2.1 A significant amount of stress.

2.2 A considerable time commitment.

2.3 An affect on relationships.

2.4 An influence on academic performance.

2.5 An affect on the enjoyment of a leadership experience.

3. A desire to lead in other situations may be a negative consequence of leadership.

4. A desire for additional power may also be a negative result of leadership.

5. Leadership experiences may lead to a lack of anonymity.

6. Students recognized the value of setting objectives, both personal and professional.

7. Much learning took place as a result of leadership.

Students were also asked about significant learnings associated with leadership involvement and revealed that:

1. Students recognized and appreciated learning resulting from leadership.

1.1 Enhancing communications skills.

1.2 Gaining support from colleagues.

1.3 Remembering experiences associated with leadership.

1.4 Willing to work.

1.5 Demonstrating leadership by actions as well as words.

1.6 Willing to make personal sacrifices.

1.7 Striking a balance between leadership and non-leadership activities.

1.8 Fulfilling of self.

1.9 Benefiting colleagues.

1.10 Recognizing time effects.

1.11 Understanding the importance of role modelling.

1.12 Developing positive relations.

2. Leadership was dynamic and might be less affected by who was the leader.
3. As new student leaders emerged yearly, the effects of leadership were not irreparable.

CHAPTER 7

INFLUENCE OF STUDENT LEADERSHIP

This chapter presents findings with respect to student leaders' perception of influence by specific organizations as well as student leadership as a whole. Students were asked to assess the relative importance of each organization and the role of student leadership in representing student interests and shaping the direction of the institution. As in chapters 5 and 6, summary comments are presented with statements from student leaders for clarity. Statements originated within personal interviews as well as group interviews.

Research Question No 5

What is the major influence of student leaders on the university community?

Two questions were posed to participants interviewed for the study. One question addressed individual perceptions of each student's organizational influence within the university community. The second question was more general and focussed on each participant's interpretation of possible effects on student leadership as a whole. Although responses focussed primarily on student leadership at the University of Alberta, many comments also reflected impressions on student leadership beyond this institution.

Political Representation

One frequent response from students was the influence of each organization as political representatives of constituent groups on campus. Student leaders identified with the role and took their responsibilities seriously. Each organization involved in the study and its student leaders recognized an overt duty within the institution's political fabric. No student denied that within the overall function of the university, student leaders and student-led organizations had a responsibility to the student community as well as the political environment of the institution. Student interests should be protected and student organizations had a unique capability and overall responsibility to ensure that concerns were identified and protected over the course of an academic year and beyond.

Student leaders understood that in order for student affairs to be safeguarded, political representation was required. Students must and should be represented at various

levels so student needs could be addressed and concerns brought forward. Student demands are not special and did not go beyond bounds of acceptability. Such needs were different and earmarked for a varied constituent group, atypical from the remainder of the university community and divergent because of the evolving nature of such a constituency. Although the role of representative may not be new one for students, such a responsibility took on greater significance within the university community. Student leaders had gained a level of respect and were now heard, listened to, and considered when issues affecting the quality of student life on campus were put forward. Carl confirmed that:

> If you're coming with suggestions and they're well thought out, they realize you're serious about this and they can't sweep this under the carpet or we'll just run a little committee, that'll shut them up. We want to see change and this is how we think we're going to change and we're going to stay on until we have it. But it goes beyond throwing macaroni. Let's get serious about this and I think no matter what group you are in whether it's a student association dealing with their faculty, or the GSA and the SU working with the whole university . . . .

While perceived by participants as tokenism with little influence, many student leaders were convinced that the role of political representation was important and mattered not only to students but also to the university community. To be present in the halls of academia allowed students to be influential on issues being presented, concerns being addressed, and steps used to deal with problems.

Political representation for students occurred at many levels and was often tied to the importance and legitimacy of representatives and issues presented. In the five groups involved in the study, some student leaders provided representation at a micro level as each fraternity group and the committee representing residences at the university were responsible for well defined groups of students, of both genders, and regardless of academic seniority. In some cases, students were represented twice as members of fraternities also living in residence.

However, at a macro level, representation was much broader with student leaders from both undergraduate and graduate student associations. Student leaders found a

broad base of support regardless of academic level attained. While all students, graduate and undergraduate, full time and part time, were being served by elected officials of two groups, some students even had representation at three different levels: as an undergraduate student, a fraternity member, and living in residence. Triple representation was often rare but such macro and micro representation occurred on occasion and provided interesting situations for student leaders faced with various problems from differing perspectives.

Diverse Community Interests

Student leaders responded to the question of competing or divergent community interests. Each individual, although a representative of a smaller constituency understood compromises and choices made if a group was to function and the role of representative was to be effective. Stan commented:

> I don't think it will ever be resolved. I think it's very dependent on who the person at the meeting is and how flexible they are. I think a lot of the infighting is just really historical. It's there because it's always been there. And so it depends on who that person, who that chapter's representative is and how the issue is going to be dealt with.

Scott, another fraternity member, although understanding his responsibility to one community, also understood the collective benefit of representation and keeping all fraternities strong. He noted:

> . . . you're obviously going to put your fraternity first but you still trying to get other people for Rush which means you have to better the whole reputation of fraternities on campus. If one fraternity goes down in flames or if something happens, then that reflects on everybody else.

Paul highlighted the collective benefits of the group and the student community being represented by pointing out that, "There are certain issues which apply to everybody regardless of where they live, what their association is or style of building they live in and there are issues which are very particular." Kelly summarized the thoughts of peers and the collective benefit provided by stating, "I think this group is really very helpful. I think everybody here cares about other people, that's the whole idea of leadership I think is that

we do care about our residences and our extended community as well."

Student leaders from the two largest student organizations on campus, the Students' Union and the Graduate Students' Association, represented larger factions of the student community, and by inclusion, were also speaking for students in fraternities and residences. While representatives' voices were louder, each student leader still had an interest in representing a particular interest group or constituency. Such attention assisted, and other times hindered, a student leader's ability to represent issues and concerns of a particular portfolio as well as dealing with overall issues of both undergraduate and graduate student communities. While still concerned with specific student issues, a greater good was being achieved for the sake of graduate or undergraduate students.

In assessing the dual role played by student representatives of two larger organizations, many student leaders had insights into rationalizing specific interests. Phil mentioned:

> . . . we look at a whole number of issues that come out of a whole bunch of different committee meetings that we each go and that we would have. We put all these lists of issues together and brought that to council and they reacted a bit differently to it but the idea was so that we had a common front.

As representatives, Gerry reinforced the idea of presenting a common perspective on issues with the following example:

> . . . one of the things we talked about at this committee today was the possible changing or standardization of the nine-point scale and what we did was publish our opinion why it should be changed to our council members, solicit informal feedback, and then we formally debate issues in here. And then we have a mandate to go forward and say what the committee has agreed.

Responsible Representation

In another large student organization, student leaders had differing views of the role as representatives, particularly when issues were not specific to particular portfolios. Harry revealed that:

> . . . when there's something that I feel might not be the most important thing for me to be paying attention to, I probably won't and it's not a matter of disrespect

> for the issue, it's a matter of prioritizing something that I might need to be reading before I leave for Ottawa or something similar.

However, Ernie felt a greater responsibility to the larger organization and the role which must be played. He commented:

> If something else is in another portfolio, as far as I'm concerned, I have to sit back and think about. I know I have a responsibility to listen as an executive member of this organization, to pay attention but at the same time, some of my own personal concerns might weigh on me. So I don't always pay attention either.

Harry found input of colleagues valuable to assist in making informed decisions and appreciated the involvement of other members of the committee even though the issue for discussion may not be of great concern to the majority. He noted:

> You'll go into meetings with administrators and they'll give you their perspective. You'll come back here and share that perspective and someone will give you a Student Union perspective or a Joe student perspective and it's a huge conflict. I think that's why it's so important to have five people you can bounce those ideas off of and come to a solution. I think because of one individual in one portfolio, it's impossible to make those decisions.

As student leaders of a political system, representation also became an obligation and commitment to various portfolios and the larger organization of which each student leader had membership. Each student was expected to make informed decisions requiring necessary details from all possible sources and making choices best suited for constituents of each portfolio. In such situations, discussions were prolonged and became intense because interests were different and perspectives were varied as well. Harry noted:

> I think when it comes to butting heads is when you have something that is part of two portfolios but going in different directions. For example, the Computer Lab. I had a little bit of a different perspective simply because from the financial position.

<u>Work on Committees</u>

Students also remarked on their work on various committees on campus. Political representation also transcended specific groups, ensured interests were protected, and

received a voice on decisions of their peers. In the university community, political representation was also a function of having a voice on formal university-wide committees composed of both university officials and students. Various committee meetings were scheduled and input was sought on issues and processes affecting the student community now or in the long term. Student leaders recognized committee work as a very important and essential role of students. Bill noted:

> I think the main influence is within the committee structure of the university. We get a lot of air time at different meetings because this is sort of our life and our purpose. We're supposed to raise issues and bring things forward, so when I'm sitting in meetings very aware of the Vice President or President or whoever is leading the meeting, what they say, and how it will be interpreted by students.

Within a university-wide structure, an opportunity to raise issues was seen as a paramount role of any organization particularly the two groups in our study representing larger segments of the student population. Students needed a collective voice when discussing matters with university officials, but also sought varying perspectives as provided by diverse student organizations.

Watchdogs

Student leaders also commented positively on their influence on committees as "watchdogs" on behalf of the student community. Such a role was viewed positively by Harry as:

> . . . in a lot of ways, it's kind of a watchdog role and I'd like to think of it a bit more constructively too in it's being the ones to push the ideas or the issues that need to be addressed. There's tons of issues the university can address but it's up to us to identify what are the really important ones and things we need to address now.

Greater Representation

Students perceived that representation was higher at the University of Alberta than most other institutions. Membership on a national organization, and a comparison of scale and scope, added credibility to the idea that representation at this institution surpassed situations elsewhere. Isabelle confirmed that:

> We have more representatives on the General Faculties Council level than most

any other universities. Our Board of Governors is somewhat consistent with other Boards across Canada in having two or three student representatives as members. But in terms of other university committees, department councils, I can't think of another example of a university that has greater representation than us.

Access to University Officials

Student leaders also felt that access to key university leaders reflected positively on

From going to conferences and speaking with other student leaders from other universities Students' Union, we heard a lot of horror stories about how they couldn't meet with the President of the university if their life depended on it , a Board Chair doesn't even want to hear from them, the Board trying to get rid of all the students, or the President of the Academic Staff Association won't meet with them. We don't have any of those problems or we haven't for at least as long as I've been involved.

Additionally, student leaders reported they were perceived positively by the rest of the university community, including administrators, academics, and support staff.

Political Nature of Relationships

Student leaders were not always prepared to risk relationships cultivated over the years. As Gerry pointed out:

We have a lot of respect built up with administrators and other members of the university community and I think that's been developed and nurtured over the years by having good people in the executive positions, people who aren't completely radical or senseless in their approach to issues, people who have strong beliefs but are willing to accept other positions and look at other positions and people who are just very constructive in their approach to dealing with issues. We're in a position where we can meet with anybody, the President all the way to people in the various areas, to professors and that helps us get our jobs done in terms of representing students.

By working with university officials, progress had been made and civility maintained. Issues could be discussed passionately yet intelligently, administrators became sensitized to students' concerns, and steps were taken to remedy problems. Frank commented:

We have gone in much the same way as we would treat the government. We say listen, we're not going to sit here and yell and scream at you to change things. We're going to come in and say let's compromise. Let's find a situation that is beneficial for both of us. Let's work together towards these common goals.

> We've really been working on it for the last three or four years and I honestly believe we're in a much better situation now than we were four years ago. If the SU wanted to go and talk to Dr. Fraser, we could more likely have a meeting within two days on any issue--if we wanted to go and talk to somebody in the government, we could run off and have a meeting whenever we wanted just because we've built up that good relationship and that rapport.

Relationships with Students

Student leaders also responded positively to relationships developed with the student community and their ability to reach out and demonstrate a commitment to student issues and a willingness to push concerns. Creating a positive relationship translated into favourable support by students and legitimacy developed with the remainder of the university community. As Ernie noted, "Of major institutions or even medium to major institutions, we have the highest voter turn-out in North America and that is research that I've just done this year because it's my interest." Good voter turn-out legitimized the role of student leaders to ably represent students' interests at various levels. However, as representatives of the student community, university officials often failed in attempts to use student leaders effectively and gain support. Isabelle reported:

> We have a great working relationship with the university administration but I wish I could get in the heads of them. They're very good at utilizing resources however if I was them, I would utilize the Students' Union as a resource. If they can get the Students' Union on-side then hopefully the Students' Union will carry their message to the students and carry the message to the government. . . .

Trouble Shooting

Student leaders echoed another negative sentiment regarding the real influence by specific organizations and student leadership as a whole. Respondents in the study were never really convinced of actual influence or whether a significant contribution was being made to the institution. Carl noted, "I guess it's my perception, as with a lot of students, the perception then is it's [the influence of student leaders] really nothing until they really need them. There's a problem and all of a sudden they do need us to help out." Isabelle added, "For students, for the people who are aware of us, it's a place to start trouble shooting and I think that's a critical role. If someone's got a problem or they don't know

what to do and they're aware that we exist, they'll come here to start problem solving." Students are often called upon during crisis situations to divert emerging problems. Viewed as "trouble shooters" and charged with either identifying a problem or averting potential difficulties, student leaders were prepared to take on such a role and were pleased to provide insights to university officials despite skepticism about their actual influence.

Yet, student leaders in the study still remained amazed at the degree of impact that student leaders had. Julia was astonished that, "I had no idea that the amount of clout a huge student body could have." Referring to the welcoming manner of university officials and desire to seek input from students she added, "They encourage it and just having that warm welcoming convinced me I could be a mover and a shaker if I wanted to be and take charge." Steve echoed a similar sentiment based on the quality of student leaders and support received during a recent referendum. He explained:

> As the poll results last night reflect, we got voter turn-out which was absolutely amazing for a plebiscite, about 13%. I think we've got student groups right across campus that are just amazing groups that usually have four or five leaders running the show, keeping things going.

Steve attributed the influence of student leadership on the university community as a result of experiences within the fraternity system and vice versa. He added:

> I've been part of my fraternity for the last four years and I've seen so many people come through the fraternity system and become part of the community at large. Whether they are part of a fraternity system first and then became involved with more of the university community or if they were part of the university community, met people who were part of the fraternity system and then became part of it, I'm not sure. So there's a very strong correlation between the people who are involved in student leadership and being part of the fraternity system because within the fraternity system, there are a lot of leadership opportunities.

Defending Students

Student leaders were also critical of a defensive role taken as student representatives. Oftentimes, student leaders were forced to defend the behaviour of other students on campus. University officials sought explanations for inappropriate behaviour and expected student representatives to explain the actions of fellow students. Students

were perceived as being "put on the defensive", a real tactic of university officials trying to curtail demands of student leaders and thus limiting effectiveness. As Isabelle mentioned, "We spend a lot of time defending ourselves which in some cases is unfortunate, but in a lot of cases is a problem. If your defending yourself and your defence isn't going very well, then you're not acting very well."

Positive Student/Administrator Relationships

Student leaders were however encouraged by the positive relationship with university administration. Isabelle called it:

> . . . one of the most consistent strong representation as far as students unions go and the government. Our relationship has been developed over the last 15 years with central administration, faculties, and provincial government. It's amazing to walk into a General Faculties Council Executive Meeting or to watch the Students' Union have an impact on the decisions that are being made. They're not making the decisions, but there putting out food for thought and being seriously considered. I think the impact on the campus community is good. I also think that the Students' Union makes a concerted effort to keep the students' concerns and the university on a negotiating level, not a head-to-head level.

Representatives of student government often wished for no more influence than providing information so that university administrators were better positioned to make decisions affecting students' lives.

Students in the study also referred to "managing" the relationship between student representatives and university officials. By managing, Harry explained:

> . . . it's taking the perspectives of the students to the other party, central administration or the library and saying look, this is the problem, this is what we'd like. This is what we want to do. We know that's impossible, we know there's not an amount of money, why don't we try this? Or what about this? It's not that the Students' Union is throwing eggs anymore, it's managing the conflict. What are acceptable solutions? Coming up with solutions and presenting them.

Managing a relationship involved making necessary efforts at understanding another position on an issue but also presenting alternative solutions.

Respondents also acknowledged that an improved influence of student leadership could be realized if the true value of students was recognized by the institution. Carl remarked:

> I believe that as students start paying more of a high percentage of the cost of education, they really need to become a consumer. And what the consumer gets to do is choose which university they will attend. Therefore, the university has to listen to its students, has to know its audience. I think especially now, the university game has become the marketing game and if you can get yourself a good rating then you're going to do well in the next year. So I do believe that student leaders have a lot of effect on what the university decides and there's no way that this university will make decisions without consulting student leaders.

A positive perspective on the role of student leadership and its relationship with university officials highlighted the economic realities of the times.

Marketing Leadership

Student leaders in the study also pointed to the untapped marketing possibilities of leadership as part of the overall education of students. Harry elaborated:

> . . . it is such a key way that students at university can develop and grow and then gain skills that they'll take to the community or take where ever their careers lead them as leaders. I think that's a really big selling point for the university, that students play such an active role, partly because of the result and the environment, but because it gives students a real growth opportunity.

Leadership opportunities provided by participation in university governance were seen as a real benefit, and could play a significant role in attracting students unsure of which institution to attend. Student leaders recognized that leadership possibilities had merits that include personal development beyond academic acquisition. Donna compared a leadership experience at another institution where, "we were university employees and in a lot of the same roles where students here were actually like elected leaders. They were doing the same kind of work, but not getting the same skill development or recognition." Respondents felt the University of Alberta could build on this strength.

Leadership and Credibility

Respondents also tied the influence of student leadership to an issue of credibility. As Frank pointed out:

> . . . it becomes very important to have a credible nature, to be able to be credible in instances where your word may be taken over others. For instance, if you have a dispute and I'm supporting a student, if I don't have any credibility and I go up against a Dean or the Chair and I say this person has a problem, he'll just brush

> me aside. Even though I don't really have the physical power or I can't delegate anything to be done, I can still motivate people to try to find solutions. So I think in that sense, it's important for me to have a sense of credibility with university staff.

Credibility was both a personal endeavour and a struggle as student leaders in new positions battled for acceptance each year.

Students offered another perspective of the influence of student leaders in its relationship with university officials. Gerry clarified with the following comment:

> I think what student leaders do is they make people think. You're getting out and telling people what you think or trying to get people thinking and motivated. It makes you more vulnerable in terms of people questioning your motives. People do question why you're doing this, what's in it for you, how come you care? Why do you care? Or why are you wasting my time and things like that.

Participants felt that students were now questioning the motives of their representatives and student leaders were seen as also challenging university officials on the rationale of many decisions.

Quality Students and Quality Leadership

Students explained the influence of student leadership on campus was directly attributed to the quality of students attending the institution. Isabelle explained:

> I think it's what largely sets the university experience apart from colleges and technical schools is you've got a large base of people who are the cream of the crop. These are people with very strong skills--academically, athletically, leadership wise, and they're all at one place at the same time. Whatever it's a student group or a fraternity or a residence or an athletic team, they're building relationships, honing skills, interacting for four years, and coming out as a whole person. It's not just with a bag of academic skills but all of these other skills. There are very few people going through university without being involved in one of those places.

Student leaders' impact was tied to the quality of students within its community and the quality of the university experience.

Creating a Culture of Leadership

Respondents also reported that student leaders may also choose to be influential, creating a supportive university community and maximizing their potential. Harry

commented:

> . . . student leadership is created here because the majority of people in university are leaders because they are the creators of knowledge and they are taking an active role in their own lives and leading their lives in a certain way. There are tremendous amounts of leadership opportunities here on campus, not provided for students by someone else, but students have created them. There's a legacy that's left behind from the past for students to filter into.

Student leaders had created an environment by having an effect on decisions at university. Such influence grew because student leaders maximized certain opportunities around campus, were allowed input, and became significant participants. A "legacy" had been created by former student leaders and a culture of involvement enabled student leaders to become important.

Perceptions of Influence

Reactions by student leaders in the study also reflected a measure of cynicism as well as frustrations with regard to real and perceived influence on campus, both as representatives of various student organizations as well as leaders. However, a number of participants were also very optimistic about the relationship enjoyed with the larger student community as well as the influence on university officials and other segments of the university community. Reactions were also a comment on the size of student groups represented as well as age of student leaders.

Student leaders felt very good about the perceived influence of student organizations on the university community. Harry reacted to the complaint that students never really get their money's worth from elected officials and commented:

> . . . our biggest thing is just trying to show them that it's totally unfounded because only 20% of their fees goes toward the SU and that's just directly providing services like Safewalk and Students Health, Registries, and then there are other services, the Week of Welcome, all the events, the opportunities on campus, the bars and restaurants we operate. Then there's the political representation. I think we do lots for students on campus . . . .

Gerry was also very high on the effect of a particular student group on campus and more influence than actually credited. He added:

> I think that the SU has more influence than a lot of people think, potentially not as much as those of us in the SU would like to think. I think that in terms of SUs in the country, we're probably one of the most influential. We have a lot of respect built up with administrators and other members of the university community and I think that's been developed and nurtured over the years by having good people in the executive positions--people who aren't completely radical or senseless in their approach to issues, people who have strong beliefs but are willing to look and accept other positions and people who are very constructive in their approach to dealing with issues.

Student perceptions of influence on campus varied from group to group. Larger student organizations regarded contributions as more significant while student representatives from smaller groups had a tainted view of possible effect. Generally student leaders from the less representative groups had a more negative perception of possible influence as highlighted by various comments. Julia, representing a smaller organization maintained that student leaders from small groups still make a difference:

> I would hope that immediately the impact would be felt by Housing and Foods and I don't mean impact in a negative form, but they understand this is a body that's willing to work at making sure all the residence associations feel equally important in Housing and Foods, that we actually work together and a lot of issues affect all of us, in different ways perhaps, but they all affect and we all have an opinion on that. Hoping that the general student body sees that [residence] associations are the real pulse of the university community.

However Melvin, a member of the same organization, was not as optimistic about the influence of that organization and student leaders to effect change and mentioned that:

> The new Housing and Residents' Committee is less powerful than before. Last year at least they had a plan which the Students Union had some say in it. They only deal with bigger issues they said. But I still don't know how they're going to deal with the bigger issues.

Limited influence. Students leaders from smaller student groups generally perceived influence as very specific to their particular organization but not beyond. Olivia noted:

> They have a great influence over those 150 females. They are the overlying body of those females, but according to campus, that is an insignificant number of people. And I don't think those people in control of the Panhell know enough about how to run an organization in order to be that influential over more people

> than they are in control of right now. They have enough strength in themselves or their numbers to influence more than that small group of people. They need to know more about running an organization.

Rachel echoed the influence of a particular organization as being very specific and added, "I don't believe that the Council has much of an impact. It does have an impact during Rush which is pretty much two times out of the year, but apart from that, I believe it doesn't really act as strong as it could be or should be."

Some student leaders perceived the influence of specific student organizations to be limited by historical precedence. Such involvement and the effect of student leadership was determined by past influence. Rachel admitted:

> . . . it's also very difficult because we're still under the taboo of sororities, a bunch of women idiots running around going 'oh look, it's a man!' It's very difficult to counteract that. In that respect, it's very difficult because we almost have to be pushing the stereotype that no, women's fraternities are not like that. We have a lot of things that we're involved in, a lot of women's issues or community service, and we're here for the advancement of women in general. It's not just for our members, but for the community at large.

Olivia was also critical of fraternity stereotypes thus limiting student leadership effectiveness:

> A lot of individuals will fall prey to a lot of stereotypes. I find that's true for society in general, but there's a lot of stereotypes derived from a lot of the American viewpoints on fraternities. So everybody thinks they're the same up here. There's not a lot of people who really know what we do, they just think we're some snotty little clubs and they get together and they get drunk all the time. That's understandable how they can have that stereotype just because that it's fed into society from American television, movies, books.

Thus the prestige of student leadership, particularly with male and female fraternities, was limited by typecasts attached to its membership and historical function on campus.

Fraternity members involved in the study did not share the same sentiment as to a need to influence the university community. In fact, many fraternity members felt that student leaders should have very little influence. Rachel mentioned:

> I'm not the president of my fraternity to have a say on campus. I'm a president of my fraternity because of the organization that it is in itself and the girls that I have

become close with. I want to see them flourish as individuals and as a chapter.

Patsy added a common concern about the reason why student leaders and fraternities in particular were not as influential as they could be. She noted, "Our numbers and our image on campus is dwindling very quickly and we're going to lose some chapters in the not too distant future." Paula reiterated:

> We don't have a very good image on campus at all and that's because we're too individualistic. We're not thinking long term, we're not thinking as a whole, we're not thinking of getting involved with the administration which we should. We should have a better say on campus and we should have a better image on campus than we do.

Student leaders from smaller organizations perceived their influence as limited by access to university officials and restricted by an image perceived internally and outside organizations as negative, thus limiting possible influence on the remainder of the university community. However, student leaders were insistent that the role of smaller organizations was not necessarily to have an influence over an entire university community but promoting a particular organization and helping members achieve a measure of success as students and student leaders. Concerns were centred around an image portrayed on campus and a negative perception of the organization by students and the remainder of the university community. A major purpose was to create an environment viewed positively that would attract more members.

Some student leaders within the fraternity system were hopeful of changes in the future so greater representation would be possible. As Patsy mentioned:

> Ideally, I'd like to get fraternity awareness out a lot more and I think the campus community needs to see all the things that fraternities do and that's a responsibility of IFC and Panhell to promote that. That is the main reason why I'm on Panhell because I haven't really seen it that much.

Perceived Versus Real Influence

Participants in the study also raised a common concern with student leadership in general as having perceived influence on paper but limited by logistics of positions and relationships with university administrators. Adam commented:

> . . . we have good representation on paper but the strength of the representation on

> campus doesn't live up to what's it's being represented on paper and there are a couple of reasons for that. The inherent one is the turn-over in student leaders. On paper, we have the same representation, but student leaders are always one step behind because it takes the first year to get caught up. So there's nothing we can really do about that. But another disadvantage that could be compensated if the student leaders were better organized and/or if a strong leader leaving took the time to maybe coach, bring along a new strong leader who would make sure that he or she is listened to and the student organizations objectives are put forth.

Due to a yearly turnover in leadership, student leaders appeared to struggle with a perceived lack of organization thus limiting their ability to influence campus.

Students also had a very sobering impression of the influence of student leadership, particularly on its ability to influence decisions on a campus-wide basis. As Melvin pointed out, "I think most of the policies of the university are already decided." He elaborated by underlining concerns of many university administrators about keeping jobs and any major changes to policies or procedures may be viewed negatively by senior administrators unresponsive to student needs. Making adjustments required proceeding with alternative plans often never discussed at length with senior university officials. Once decisions were made, regardless of student input or desire to have student leaders involved in the decision making process, the final decision would follow plans already set in motion. Therefore, students in general and student leaders in particular had little influence. Consultation may have taken place however, major decisions affecting policy and future direction of the institution were made elsewhere and student leaders had little effect. On occasions when students' input was required, the actual role of student leaders revolved around supporting a policy change as opposed to setting policy. University administrators were quite content to have student leaders endorse decisions. Changes could affect procedures and practices but would not affect policies.

Summary

This chapter examined the influence of student leadership and various student organizations on the university community. The following findings emerged from the study:

1. Political representation was at the heart of student leadership in a university

community. Among these were:

1.1 Representing divergent community interests.

1.2 Ensuring responsible representation.

1.3 Working on various university committees.

1.4 Being sensitive to the entire university community.

1.5 Managing relationships between student and university communities.

2. Student leaders often fulfilled a watchdog role at the university. This implied that:

2.1 Influence might be specific to particular student groups.

2.2 Fraternities had only limited influence on a university community.

3. Student leaders were able to access university officials quite readily. This implied:

3.1 Maintaining relations with university officials was important.

3.2 Working collaboratively with colleagues on campus.

4. Among the other responsibilities of student leaders were:

4.1 Trouble shooting activities.

4.2 Defending the actions of other students.

4.3 Allowing people to examine motives.

4.4 Having more clout than expected.

5. Many student leaders perceived their role as mere tokenism. This included:

5.1. Influence might only be significant on paper.

5.2. Failure of university officials to recognize the true value of student leadership.

5.3. Error in properly marketing leadership opportunities at university.

6. The credibility of student leadership must be safeguarded.

7. Quality students fostered quality leadership.

8. A culture of leadership was developed and maintained.

CHAPTER 8
DISCUSSION

This chapter examines the findings of the study in relation to previous research involving student leaders. Each research question is addressed separately and results emerging from the research are presented. Some discussion focuses on earlier studies involving student leaders and student leadership as reviewed in Chapter 2 however, the primary purpose of the chapter is to discuss findings of the study in relation to each research question.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the behaviour of university student leaders in specific leadership positions.

General Research Question

What relationship is perceived to exist between the characteristics and experiences of university student leaders and their behaviour in formal, specific leadership positions?

Research Question No. 1

Which past personal experiences are most influential on the leadership behaviour of students in formal leadership positions?

Community

Students recognized the influence of the home community in providing initial experiences and facilitating early involvement in leadership activities. Among inaugural environments for students were schools with various out-of-class activities. Students were able to experience first successes as participants as well as leaders. The team concept of sports also provided an initial connection with peers and generated an emerging interest in leadership. In such groups, individuals looked to certain individuals for guidance. Valued skills, physical or personal, were quickly recognized. Whether in a formal leadership position as defined by team captaincy, or informal leadership as demonstrated by physical prowess, the team concept, with its involvement of individuals and emerging leadership skills, could not be dismissed. As important, but less noticeable, were interpersonal or developmental competencies promoted through the sporting

medium. Skills required in a work environment were also highlighted. Students understood that even though a supervisor may be recognized formally by an organization as a leader, peers possessed similar skills and demonstrated leadership prowess worthy of acknowledgment. Earlier studies (Gentelia, 1986; Hall and Kielsmeier, 1985; Drum, 1988) had established a positive relationship between the community and leadership development. Results of the study confirmed similar research (Simms, 1974; Harville, 1969; Maher, 1985; Rollow & Bryck, 1993) on the influence of fellow students on student leaders, potential of student leaders among students in schools, and the importance of schools in serving the needs of students and community.

Students in the study had also identified strongly with such service organizations as the YMCA and Air Cadets as having been instrumental in promoting initial involvement and leadership. The results supported earlier studies (Rockwell et al., 1981, Theilheimer, 1988) on the influence of adults participation in 4-H and its help in development of career goals and leadership skills as well as a chance to meet people. Thus, community activities and participation in school, particularly activities with a leadership focus, were influential in spearheading increased involvement.

University

While in university, many students spent a considerable amount of time in residence which provided opportunities to socialize, become involved in a myriad of activities, and develop personal skills. Participants identified various possibilities within a residential system for initial involvement, in small leadership roles creating greater possibilities as senior student leaders or even para-professionals. Fraternities also introduced students to a new social network on campus and provided opportunities for involvement and leadership. Living environments identified above supported Wallace's (1966) contention that student housing such as residences and fraternities were influential in socialization and the transmission of culture as well as Kuh et al.'s (1991) assertion of student residences' importance to learning and personal development. Findings from the study confirmed earlier studies (Stage et al., 1991; Stonewater, 1988; Wilson et al., 1987; Arndt, 1975; Beamer, 1975; Pounder, 1990; Williams & Reilley, 1991; Lynch & Hall,

1968; Dadez 1991) outlining the positive relationship between student development and residence halls including graduate residences (Montgomery, 1968; Bales & Sharp, 1981) and fraternities (Kuder, 1972; Kimborough, 1996; Haemmerle, 1996). In addition, support for the influence of residence hall government (Crookston, 1993; Hoelting, 1974; Cahill, 1969) provided further evidence of its positive relationship to student leadership development.

Students also appreciated the supportive environment of university for its many learning opportunities. Varied options created potential leadership possibilities for the future. Findings from the study confirmed earlier research (Boyer, 1987; Kuh et al., 1991) on the importance and learning surrounding out-of-class experiences as well as additional studies (Hopkins, 1996; Rockingham, 1990; Cooper et al. 1994, Hernandez, 1987) on a positive relationship between college experiences, later achievements as community leaders, and greater involvement as part of the campus community. Results also supported that participation in programs and activities while at university (Sawyer, 1988; Young, 1986, Silien et al., 1992; Fitch, 1987) helped students focus on leadership skill development, service to the community, and volunteering. Findings from the study also confirmed the importance of multicultural and multiracial environments (Johnson, 1995; Mink, 1993), intercollegiate athletics (Handel, 1993) and physical education (Quinn, 1992) in providing opportunities for students to develop such skills as communication, organizational, and decision making. The research also confirmed earlier studies (Triponey, 1989; Sessa, 1990; Romano, 1994) encouraging participation in alternative leadership experiences for college and university students, extensive involvement by student leaders in extracurricular activities, supportive family backgrounds as well as learning leadership through practice and the importance of peer relationships.

People

Teachers were seen as key influences as was receiving regular encouragement from other sources in the school system. Several individuals in authority positions provided support, and were viewed as tremendous motivators, creating an environment

for students to become involved early in life and continuing participation within and beyond the school system. Results supported an earlier study (Stasz et al., 1985) on the positive influence of teachers as viable role models.

Peer groups also had a tremendous influence in generating initial interest in an activity and encouraging on-going involvement. Young children might be shy and used the prodding of friends to take initial steps towards involvement. While peers may not have recognized leadership abilities, group affiliation provided an opportunity to spend additional time with friends and share a common interest. Students explored new possibilities beyond safe environments and acknowledged the support of peers during initial ventures into new activities or later into leadership roles.

Supervisors at work also featured prominently as young people learned new skills and performed assigned duties. Students observed individuals in authority positions during interactions with superiors, relations with co-workers, and dealings with customers. Observations went beyond technical expertise and included interpersonal skills associated with leadership. Results confirmed earlier research (Adler, 1983) on similarities in behavioural tendencies between subordinates and supervisors and a relationship to modelling behaviour.

Role models, mentors, and other important people in the lives of student leaders came from various age groups and had many backgrounds. Some individuals were important during early years and remained critical to success. Parents, teachers, and coaches were examples of individuals exacting influence for long periods of time supporting studies (Hartman, 1992; Stahlhut & Hawkes, 1990; Shandley, 1989; Treat et al., 1995) on the role of parents as positive influences on students' leadership styles and leadership qualities, teachers as mentors as well as programs on leadership mentoring and role modelling.

Past Leadership Experiences

Politically-related activities became an introduction for many students into leadership. Commitment was minimal at the start, but as positive feelings were created, friends acquired, experiences gained, and efforts rewarded, greater involvement resulted.

Previous studies (Schlesinger & Baldridge, 1982; Kelley, 1994; Cox & Marks, 1984; Bell, 1986; Deegan, 1985; Rast & James, 1973; Deegan et al., 1989; Gilmore & Scott, 1995; Lepchenske, 1978; Moore, 1995; Remley & Ruby, 1993; Boatman, 1988) on participation in student government acknowledged benefits of such opportunities to learn about government, become involved in the political process, as well as serve the community.

Positives aspects of past leadership experiences. Positive experiences supported by key individuals had a significant influence on perceptions of involvement and leadership. Support was gained, favourable comments by colleagues were made, and further involvement was rewarded with greater personal satisfaction. Such positive reactions could be powerful learning tools and motivators for continued involvement, initial leadership within an organization, or participation in other areas.

Individuals seemed to relish positions void of tangible measures of success and encouraging new standards. Having few controls created boundless possibilities for individuals to explore, grow, and learn. Freedom also provided room for creativity, development of new ideas, and initiative. Interdependence brought a sense of ownership, a determinism of outcome from developing all facets of a plan, and a vested interest in its completion. Providing leeway for creativity and individual thought also brought a certain responsibility.

Students assumed positions of leadership for skill acquisition and certain positions afforded unique developmental opportunities. In many instances, students became involved to enhance skills. Interpersonal skills were considered essential for students considering career options after university. Leadership provided an important asset along with academic endeavours, and it benefited the university experience. Certain skills might have been familiar, a result of past experiences, and proficiency was increased with added involvement. Students also saw an opportunity to develop new skills. To deal effectively with individuals, facilitate interaction with colleagues, provide clear and concise information, and ensure details were well understood had merits beyond situations at university. Leadership positions also facilitated the development of personal

abilities. Coping with stress, appreciating patterns of behaviour as stressed induced, and recognizing emotional, physical, or mental cues were identified. Time management called for addressing the needs of leadership, pursuing academic requirements, and taking part in social or recreational activities. Conflict management identified differing points of view, achieved resolution, and reached objectives.

To set and attain a goal could be both rewarding and a learning experience. Identifying a set of objectives and developing an action plan provided a great deal of education. Strategies were outlined and time lines established. Regardless of barriers, completion of each task continued to be primary and a source of motivation. Such dogged persistence became a powerful learning tool and a useful skill for both immediate and future needs.

Recognition could also be a worthwhile incentive. Appreciation for effort and commitment to an organization were on-going motivators for an individual with doubts about necessary abilities or devotion to assigned responsibilities. Leadership initiatives took centre stage because efforts were appreciated and satisfaction was derived. Academics continued to be a raison d'etre, but much of a university experience now revolved around leadership activities.

Creating a pleasant working environment for other members became another positive aspect of past leadership experiences. Although becoming self absorbed in a position and its responsibilities could be easy, a leader could not ignore other members. When insulated by duties of leadership, an opportunity could be missed to foster a welcoming and supportive environment for colleagues. To ignore, dismiss, or fail in attempts to collaborate because of personality differences could only be counterproductive.

Negatives aspects of past leadership experiences. Negative experiences also served to educate. While failure may discourage further involvement, significant learning took place. Inappropriate behaviour in dealing with the public or co-workers would be noticed. Negative role models provided opportunities to observe behaviour to be avoided and identified skills that were lacking.

Stress forced leaders to examine closely reactions to various situations. Individuals were presented with opportunities to test comfortable limits and explore new boundaries of performance. Pressures of leadership also focussed on coping mechanisms. Developing effective patterns of behaviour became important as stress remained a part of leadership. Techniques were learned, skills were developed, and students exposed to stress through leadership were given many possibilities to learn and grow.

Stress in friendships also occurred as shuffling went on between old friends from school and community, lifelong confidants and support network, and a new circle of friends acquired through leadership. Stress may also have been associated with decreased time for old pursuits. Activities once part of a regular routine and shared with friends had been set aside for the sake of greater involvement and leadership. If such activities included large groups of participants, absence from both activity and individuals became double stressors.

Thus, students identified involvement in community activities including school, sports, and work in shaping leadership behaviour. In addition, students also recognized the influence of various experiences on campus such as residence life, fraternities, and involvement in co-curricular activities as sparking future leadership involvement. Finally, students acknowledged the contribution of role models and mentors such as parents, teachers, friends, and colleagues in generating on-going interest in leadership.

Research Question No. 2

What leadership behaviour is demonstrated by students in formal leadership positions?

Findings from the study supported earlier research (Hart, 1994; Raiola, 1995) that successful leaders interact with group members, draw on their skills and knowledge, build relationships through positive and effective communication, support, and encourage group members. Findings also recognized previous studies (Lashway, 1997; Hart & Kean, 1996) on collaboration and empowerment by leaders as well as effective college student leadership through: consistency in word and action; ownership of responsibility for actions and leadership position; development of healthy relationships with friends,

coworkers, mentors, and mentees; and ethical decision making. Kustaa (1993) had also reported on leadership effectiveness in terms of: (a) goals of leadership; (b) charismatic leadership; (c) style of leadership; (d) dynamics of diplomacy, creativity, and communication; and (e) leader behaviour, while Hansen and Braglio-Luther (1980) had advocated gaining experience in communication, agenda sharing, goal setting, and personal leadership style. A similar study (Posner &Brodsky, 1994) identified effective leaders as engaged in challenging, inspiring, enabling, modelling, and encouraging practices. Results of this study are consistent with their findings.

Meetings

Interviews with participants in the study acknowledged similar conclusions drawn from earlier research (Hall, 1992) which supported differing roles for the group leader, varied duties assumed by group members, and minimal responsibilities for the leader. As well, findings from the study confirmed earlier research (DeLuca, 1983) examining the importance of the meeting, its structure and function, the role of the leader, and the importance of group dynamics.

Formality and informality. Formality within an organization provided an opportunity for learning within a structured environment. In organizations with a youthful membership, a sense of formality and order enabled new members to view organizational fabric, meetings procedures, and membership expectations. An understanding of roles was created and blended with responsibilities within the larger organization. Structure remained necessary if a group was to perform and serve as an important learning tool for new members getting acquainted with an organization as well as group behaviour. Formality within a meeting also enabled new members to gauge the output of senior associates and overall expectations. Comparisons allowed members to assess personal performance in relation to group requirements. A degree of formality ensured business concerns were addressed, a structured format was retained, and regular meetings took place.

Informality might be viewed as creating confusion and preventing issues from being examined closely, discussed throughly, and viewed intelligently by attendees. Any

organization, absent of structure during meetings and without control of its members, might be a reflection of an ineffective or non leader. However, a leader's strength might be a willingness not to impose structure during meetings. Effective leadership could also flourish in an environment even if a leader chose not to hold a firm grip on members. Experimentation was allowed, and a degree of freedom exercised. Allowing a degree of informality during meetings might also be a leader's learning tool. Flexibility and casualness may be an ideal forum for individuals to emerge from a group and demonstrate skills and leadership potential. Informality also enabled a leader to identify members performing and other individuals failing to live up to expectations. While bantering may be good-natured among friends and colleagues, few other occasions could be available for members to be heard, frustrations expressed, questions answered, and their worth demonstrated to an organization.

Formality and informality in meetings was very much a product of a leader and other members of a group getting acquainted with one another and being comfortable with inoffensive interjections at non-scheduled times. Unless opportunities were provided for informal bantering or a leader recognized the need or value for informality, a group was unlikely to get beyond formal aspects of a meeting and dive into substantive issues.

Voting and consensus. Choosing between voting and consensus as a decision making process could be a reflection of group members. When membership is made up of like-minded individuals, an understanding exists of aims, objectives, and purpose of an organization. Arriving at decisions to best serve an organization and its membership is likely painless. Cunningham and Gresso (1993) identified similar characteristics among members such as shared vision, spirit of collegiality, and a climate of mutual support which fosters consensus building.

A consensus approach to decision making could also reflect a desire by leadership to include every member in decisions affecting an organization. By utilizing this approach, an opportunity was provided for everyone to comment on an issue and raise a point of view. Each participant in a discussion brought an argument to be considered and

the forum provided by the informal meeting allowed all comments to be heard and a decision made. Consensus invited participation, involvement from all, and led to a free flow of discussion. Bostrom et al.(1995) supported that critical meeting facilitation skills encouraged a collaborative group approach to working and learning.

Consensus was also a learning tool. While all members were prepared to contribute to a discussion and the decision making process, elocution of various points of view enabled members to formulate arguments and comments in a public forum. Students learned to express views clearly and concisely, formulated convincing arguments, and presented a perspective that other members might support. In the absence of such an approach, members were unable to improve public speaking and communication skills.

Group Dynamics. Positive group dynamics affected a student group's ability to work together. In student organizations, individuals worked closely as part of a committee, from the beginning of the academic year concluding together 8 or 12 months later. A group's evolution into a cohesive, working unit would take time and affected its collective work and production in the long term. Once a degree of familiarity was achieved, and confidence gained from several months in a position, making comments was no longer intimidating. As the gap between experienced and non-experienced members narrowed, comments and input from everyone increased and effectiveness heightened. Leadership was seen as important in the development of positive group dynamics.

Roles

Various roles during meetings and within organizations were also examined. Respondents provided a number of interesting role descriptors. A mediator presented an objective, unbiased view of a situation, examined alternatives, and made suggestions to achieve resolution. A person might bring an historical perspective enabling parties involved to consider a committee's past ability to deal with a similar issue. A mediator may also have knowledge of a particular portfolio and provide enlightenment based on historical precedent. An individual may also have knowledge of personalities and

understand a particular member's motives.

A motivator's role was usually set aside for a person having garnered experience with an organization and gained respect among its members or even the student community. A motivator might also use timing within a present situation to bring the group together. While a president might be a likely person, the role of motivator was not necessarily limited to the head of a group. Some leaders allowed certain committee members to assume the responsibility for motivation.

A facilitator's role required an appreciation for group concerns as well as personalities. A facilitator generated individual contributions to group discussions, allowed comments to be heard from other members, enabled committee debate to progress, and ensured issues were resolved. Immediate meeting productivity and overall group effectiveness were enhanced.

A moderator role may be associated with formal meetings, particularly if a speakers' list was expected and prepared. If a meeting was progressing slowly or discussions were at a standstill, a person would take a moderator's role to guide the flow of debate and bring issues to closure. A moderator observed the progress of a meeting and would move into the required function. A moderator provided order to proceedings, enabled everyone to have input, directed discussions, and ensured all comments were heard and considered. Guided discussions appeared to give all participants an opportunity to contribute.

An advisor's role might be earmarked for someone within or outside an organization. An insider brought recent experiences gained as a member of a group, probably in an executive position. An insider was probably older and gained respect from former and incumbent members. No pre-determined role within an organization was assigned but an insider would attend regular meetings, provide input, volunteer suggestions, or make assessments of situations based on experience or past precedents. In many cases, a past president assumed the role of inside advisor. Many organizations also looked to someone outside the immediate membership to fulfill the role. Usually older and having occupied a formal leadership position within an organization several years

ago, an outsider had been asked or volunteered to take on the role. Experience played a key factor as a person relied on events and activities of past years to bring relevance to present situations. An external advisor also brought a cultural perspective to a present organization and aided a group during its initial growth and maturation period. A greater role might be in store for the outsider during early months of a group's mandate. An external advisor with several years experience would assist a new executive in avoiding pitfalls and errors of previous administrations.

In the role of worker or "doer", one or two individuals would often volunteer to complete an organization's "grunt work." At other times the president may have assigned certain individuals. To ensure the legwork of an organization was executed might not be a glorified role for a member but remained important and part of the success of any group.

Schmoozers had cultivated strong relationships by establishing ties with the university community. Uniquely positioned within the leadership context of an institution, such individuals reclaimed certain favours and aided the organization. Having good, positive working relationships with various organizations and retrieving such aid at opportune times in the future made a schmoozer a vital asset to any group.

Role of the president. In the case of the president, roles and opinions often carried as much weight as the level of respect garnered over a leadership period. No formal role was described although the president might assume certain responsibilities at key times. If a leader had a history of rendering decisions with positive results and the organization had proven productive in the long term, a comment put forth at the end of a discussion may be viewed as the last word. However, if questionable decisions had been made in the past or a leader's abilities were in doubt, comments might be disregarded or ignored.

Most members imagined a president as a moderator of group meetings, someone not controlling but determining procedures, order of speakers, contributions by committee members, and a pre-determined flow. A moderator may be more pronounced at the beginning of a year as newly elected members attended meetings but were unsure of informal duties within a meeting format. As individuals settled into specific roles within

a group, a president may not need to assert a moderating influence. However if intervention was required, a president was prepared to fulfill such a role to meet needs of a particular situation. A president may also be required to moderate discussions from time to time when views of only a few members were being heard. Some people saw a president occupying several roles in a more informal capacity during a particular meeting and even over the course of a year. A president might be an advisor at many meetings and on various issues. A facilitator role could be required at certain meetings if a specified group member was absent or had abdicated that responsibility on an issue. Mediation between opposing factions or differing opinions on a issue might also be needed. An effective president was seen as someone understanding meeting flow and the appropriate intervention at a specific time. To know an advisor was required, to understand the need for a moderator, to use a facilitator and move a meeting forward, and to appreciate a motivator's role was now required, demanded perception. A president's real skill might only be assessed from roles taken during meetings and willingness to assume varied duties. Given the experience and contacts outside an organization, a president might examine past performance and effectiveness to date based on members' meeting or failing responsibilities to a constituent group.

Role Models

Role models displayed certain characteristics that students observed and respected. Mannerisms, modes of dress, comments made, reflected a desired type of leadership style. Characteristics may also be perceived rather than actual and might reflect an "ideal role model," someone possessing necessary qualities and displaying behaviour expected in all situations. Conduct would also be consistent with expectations of all good leaders. Acceptable behaviour was used as a learning tool, ready to be copied and made part of one's own leadership deportment. Detrimental experiences were also tremendously influential as students could observe a leader and do the opposite which perceived as more appropriate. Results supported earlier studies (Roche, 1990; Trachtenberg, 1988; Hart & Kean, 1996) whereby mechanisms to foster and develop leadership skills including role-modelling, mentoring, and networking had been

examined; the development of good leadership skills by observing good role models rather than formal training; and student leaders' view that leadership was a full-time job and they were role models for those who followed.

Pressure

Student leaders also discussed pressures linked to student leadership and exhibited in various ways. Pressure came from remaining in leadership and trying to "prove everyone wrong" or getting out and letting someone else assume control. Appreciation was gained as a leader battled through various pressures of leadership and performed beyond all expectations. Pressure also came from unfulfilled expectations. Student leaders, regardless of outcome, assumed that more work could have been accomplished.

A litany of related stresses associated with student leadership were also identified. Such pressures included demands of a position and expectations of other individuals, both inside and outside the group. Permanent staff within an organization were also evaluating student leaders from year to year. Stresses also came from past student leaders. Referred to as "ghosts," certain individuals had performed similar duties as members of previous administrations and had set standards for incumbents. Finally, pressure was also identified by one student as the only female on an executive and in many instances, the only female in meetings with academics and senior administrators. Hoping to be noticed for insights and knowledge on various matters, this lone female student could not ignore that many times, gender as opposed to any competency, became the contentious issue. Student leaders acknowledged that the university environment remained a bastion of maleness despite all and recent efforts to create an environment assumed to be more "gender friendly."

Students acknowledged the need for both formality and informality during meetings to enhance effectiveness and that consensus was a preferred mode of decision making. Group dynamics evolved over time and various roles were required by members in order for meetings and groups to function effectively. Finally role modelling was expected of students in leadership positions.

Research Question No. 3

Which major benefits do students gain from involvement in formal leadership activities?

Respondents recognized both positive and negative outcomes resulting from leadership. For student leaders in the study, participating in leadership had many positive results. However, there were also negative consequences which could not be ignored and were identified during interviews. Although the intent of the question was to focus on the perceived positive results of leadership, it became important for negative outcomes to be identified as well.

Skill Development

Participants discussed the improvement of various skills and attributes as a result of leadership. Although identified by participants as skills, many were attributes and aptitudes gained as a result of exposure to various leadership opportunities. Among the most notable was the ability to address a group and speak clearly and concisely on a topic. To gather thoughts quickly and express them clearly was coveted by most leaders and often taken for granted. Expressing oneself in front of people was viewed as intimidating but student leaders appreciated opportunities provided by leadership to improve such a skill.

Increased self confidence also related to successes achieved as a leader and could be attributed to participating in positive leadership experiences, organizing oneself and colleagues, delegating, meeting deadlines, preparing reports and presentations, and assisting an organization in meeting its objectives. Self confidence was gained from past experiences enabling students to acquire skills, make mistakes, and learn from errors as new situations arose. Knowing one's abilities, strengths, limitations, and areas of improvement also allowed colleagues to gain confidence in a leader.

Developing strong organizational skills was also an asset as leaders were able to coordinate group tasks, use strengths of individuals, and allow contributions from all members. Organizational skills also required a recognition of individual abilities as well as skill limitations. Identifying and utilizing personal strengths were considered as well

as contributions by all individuals to a particular task. Organizational skills dictated that a leader understood an experience to be positive, interesting, and encouraged involvement by other members. A leader motivated colleagues and offered opportunities to experience varied activities.

Commitment to an organization and to a cause were also highlighted. Students were quick to recognize colleagues serving personal interests as opposed to benefiting the organization. Positions of leadership made demands on personal and school time and required a devotion to a cause and an organization. To give any less would invite ridicule and skepticism by colleagues and the student community. No matter how large an institution, the student community tended to be very open and individuals not prepared to work diligently for an organization and looking after their self interests would be quickly dismissed. Members of a group, sensing a lack of commitment by a leader, were likely to lessen individual efforts and become less interested in making a leader shine at the expense of an organization. A leader, unwilling to make the necessary effort, was also unlikely to be surrounded by individuals fully committed to an organization. If a leadership position was sought to impress friends, family, and make future contacts, the success of an organization might be jeopardized. Other members also gained positively from such an experience and would likely continue involvement or move to other positions of leadership. Expected contacts would also materialize as a leader developed a positive reputation and peers would likely notice successes.

Having members depend on each other for task and project completion also demonstrated reliability. Once a task was assigned, members could count on colleagues including its leader to carry the activity to conclusion. Interdependence on group members was viewed positively, creating a leadership environment of mutual support. Qualities of independence and self sufficiency that leaders brought to an organization were respected but much admiration also came from leadership dependence, a reliance on colleagues to assist in certain tasks and responsibilities. Leaders appreciated the value of supportive members and turned to group accomplishments as opposed to individual successes. Dependence could do much for credibility and respect as any individual effort.

Once credit was shared with group members, leaders earned respect and leadership became a collaborative effort. Creating interdependence of members offered several options to strengthen leadership as well as improve effectiveness. Individual and collective strengths of an organization were explored. Member skills were identified, competencies possibly going unnoticed if leaders failed to seek advice or help from colleagues. Interdependency was not perceived as a sign of weakness or an unwillingness to accept responsibility but an openness by leaders and acceptance of group resources to benefit an organization. Far from demonstrating weakness in leadership, relying on other members highlighted leadership strength and willingness to seek support, advice, and help of co-workers. Depending on the collective, abilities enhanced leadership, highlighted group potential, and magnified organizational effectiveness. Results supported an earlier study (Sermersheim, 1996) with fraternity student leaders and the development of work-related and personal life skills, and similar research (Seevers et al., 1995; Dormody & Seevers, 1994; Seevers & Dormody, 1994) with Future Farmers of America and 4-H participants on life skills development.

Leadership Development

Experiencing leadership and observing other leaders was revealing for individuals unsure of future career paths or even present academic pursuits. Involvement in leadership, particularly at senior levels, enabled individuals to assess whether academic preparation at university would provide similar opportunities. A chosen discipline might never be as rewarding or challenging as present leadership experiences. Students, once involved at university and exposed to leadership activities, often reexamined chosen educational programs and moved into new academic streams. Students also selected new programs for different but related reasons. Having experienced leadership, work involved, and its responsibilities, students opted for academic programs with lesser leadership possibilities in the future. Some respondents indicated that initial exposure to leadership placed too many personal demands, was too stressful, and became burdensome.

Students also learned to appreciate the inordinate number of duties attached to any

leadership position. From personal experiences as leaders or observing other individuals, students accepted the workload of leadership and were prepared to carry out necessary duties. Successful leaders were not afraid to "get their hands dirty" and do the work assigned. Part of leadership demands were tasks external to an organization. Other expectations were duties within an organization, activities relating to its overall success or individual achievements. Finally, students reported work in relation to interpersonal tasks with people outside as well as within an organization. Hard work and success also originated from expectations of peers within an organization as well as beyond.

To experience leadership also had much intrinsic value. Identifying leadership traits, focussing on personal qualities contributing to leadership, and recognizing skills could all be gained. Through leadership, individuals were provided opportunities to expand existing skill sets and develop new abilities. An environment was created of individuals interacting effectively with one or several other group members, accomplishing desired tasks, reaching specified objectives, and working collectively toward organizational goals.

Students' leadership development also came from observation and experimentation. Appropriate courses of action for particular situations were learned as well as undesirable behaviour. Information was collected on different reactions to similar situations and acceptable responses. However, most learning came from actual involvement in leadership. Active participation enabled students to experiment with skills required for effective leadership. Through investigation and involvement, students understood necessary requirements. Personal strengths as well as individual needs were identified. Students realized that leadership required time and demanded performance, sometimes more than originally expected. Leaders also learned to follow, put egos aside, and allowed group members to assume control at various times. Leadership demanded humaneness, a compassion to give, to be supportive of colleagues, and have patience. Teaching also took place as leadership became more a selfless than a selfish act. Students involved in leadership learned that an openness to change provided great opportunities for growth.

Success and effectiveness of leadership required considerations of multiple opinions and options beyond an average pool of resources. Leaders appreciated the contributions of colleagues to leadership success and gained benefits from involving more people. As leadership opened to differing options, new possibilities emerged. Members were now allowed to contribute, to have input into organizational planning and goal setting. A new openness created new potential for leaders as well as group members. While undue pressures might be placed on leaders, possibilities also emerged for leadership to live up to expectations and gain confidence. Once credibility was acquired, successes were rewarded with even greater trust. Support of members was appreciated and leaders were prepared to take necessary steps to ensure confidence was not betrayed. Boosting members' self confidence also raised leadership status within an organization.

Visioning and planning required maturity. To understand maturity was to appreciate growth and the influence of a leadership experience. Being responsible for various individuals and projects, overseeing events, and observing growth in individuals became very developmental. Changes took place and leaders became more astute as a result of varied experiences. Maturing benefits of leadership were associated with the amount of responsibility associated with such positions. Although some control was likely, each position dictated the degree of leadership to be assumed. Its effect on maturity depended on leaders' willingness and openness to accept responsibility and surrounding conditions. If certain duties were required and accepted, maturity was achieved to match a leader's expectations and demands of a position. If the responsibility level for a position was higher than an individual's willingness to assume, gains in maturity were less. To be unprepared for various duties brought frustration and disenchantment with leadership and developed into a negative experience for the leader, other members of a group, and the organization as a whole. Dissonance between expected and actual levels of responsibility affected maturity and led to dissatisfaction. As well, fewer responsibilities of leadership could also affect maturity. An individual not allowed to fulfill leadership potential because of position requirements created disappointment, unrealized benefits, and disengagement. Leadership effects on maturity

became a match of leader's expectations and responsibility levels with demands of various positions. Both proper and improper matches had different effects.

Many students prized years at university and particularly time spent in leadership as most important and enjoyable. While leaders may not have time to appreciate all benefits due to pressures and responsibilities, involvement at university was cherished and social networks became very important. Beyond skills acquired, duties carried out on behalf of leadership, and formal and informal contacts, most individuals remembered involvement and leadership experiences for the people met and friends made. Other aspects were important and reflected positively on learning taken place. However, moments remembered with fondness surrounded experiences with people involved in leadership. Such events included formal contacts during meetings, colleagues within an organization, and informal meetings with individuals to discuss various issues. Persons influential to a leader and contributing to personal and professional development were recalled with special significance. Leaders acknowledged highlights of involvement and people making such an experience special. These findings supported earlier studies (Karnes & Meriweather, 1989; Munson & Zwilling, 1986; Schuh & Laverty, 1983) which recognized leadership development among secondary school students as well as other research (Young, 1986; Preissler & Hadley, 1992; Mouritsen & Quick, 1987; Grace, 1996; Ritter & Brown, 1986; Stanford, 1992; Breeze-Mead , 1991; and Key, 1996) with college and university students on benefits derived from leadership experiences including the development of leadership potential.

Students recognized significant skill development as a result of involvement in leadership activities. Attributes and skills identified included gains in self confidence and organizational abilities allowed students to observe proper and improper behaviour in other leaders, enabled experimentation, and benefited leadership development. Such skills and experiences were deemed valuable for the short term as students undertook leadership activities while at university but were acknowledged as beneficial as students moved on to post-university careers.

Research Question No. 4

What significant learning take place from involvement in formal student leadership activities?

Skill acquisition and improvement occurred as students became more involved in leadership activities and immersed in the work of an organization. Most individuals involved in leadership developed an ability to communicate effectively and were able to share thoughts and feelings with a large audience. Regardless of skills acquired, leaders were also able to learn from colleagues. Improved skills demonstrated an on-going desire for personal growth and commitment to an organization. Results supported similar studies (Hutchison et al., 1988; Heifetz & Laurie, 1997; Baugh, 1981) identifying skills resulting from leadership including problem solving, decision making, setting goals and objectives; project management; and people managing skills, including interpersonal communications, conflict management, motivation, mentoring; value clarification; and such areas as: interpersonal skills, personal skills, and organizational or management sills, such as problem-solving and decision-making.

Leadership also placed physical demands on individuals and persons assuming a such roles became sensitive to its physical work and emotional toll. Leaders should be prepared for physical demands because of its extraordinary schedule. Dealing effectively with stress in leadership was recognizing its on-going existence and learning to make decisions despite its presence. Leaders learned to work with stress rather than dismiss its influence and did not allow decisions and personalities to be influenced negatively.

Leadership and Time

Significant time commitment of student leadership was identified. Expectations remained that leaders shoulder the burden and be prepared to devote the most time to an organization and its membership. If leaders could not give the time required, pressures mounted within an organization that leadership expectations were not being met and tasks remained unfinished. Questions of commitment would be raised if organizational goals were not being achieved. Doubts began, work remained undone, and expectations left unfulfilled.

Leadership required more time than initially expected, and leaders compensated by squeezing extra hours and sacrificing time with family and friends. Dropping a course or two and adding an extra year of university was often an associated cost to a full commitment to leadership. Academic expediency would be sacrificed temporarily for the sake of having an opportunity to become involved in leadership and to make a complete dedication to such an experience.

Demands of Leadership

Acknowledging the value of leadership affirmed that several factors had a positive influence as well as critical incidents which could affect leadership negatively. Both people and events combined to create and influence leadership. Students accepted responsibility for a litany of factors contributing to its development. Necessary skills were improved so a positive and productive leadership experience would be realized. Co-workers were encouraged to play an active role in the organization or the activity. Beyond members of a group, and internal influences, situations outside the group would also have an effect. Leadership was an experience and included components, both internal and external, influencing a leader's behaviour in various situations. The study supported the Open Systems perspective of leadership (e.g., Deal, 1985; Fielder & Chemers, 1974; House, 1971; Schein, 1985) highlighting a relationship between internal and external environments.

Many facets and key points determining quality leadership were identified. First, a leader gained respect and retained approval of colleagues within an organization if the work required was undertaken and completed. Any leader of a group was the person ready and willing to do the most work with colleagues and benefiting the organization. Active participation was one measure of leadership and a legitimate approach to gaining respect from colleagues. Students mentioned the influence of charismatic leaders able to get away without much work for an organization. Charisma was often associated with the Classical Theory of leadership emphasizing psychological traits of leaders (e.g., House & Baetz, 1979; Katz & Kahn, 1978; Stogdill, 1974). A perception existed that if an individual brought personal qualities to a leadership situation, a lesser effort was required.

Whether a combination of physical features, communication skills, interpersonal abilities, respect garnered outside an organization, or intangible qualities, certain physical or personality traits assisted a leader in working with colleagues and representing an organization. While a leader may have qualities to influence initial impressions, respect had to be earned and rarely without tangible demonstrations. Hard work and commitment to an organization and its membership needed to be reinforced.

Although countless expectations abounded, 24-hour leadership was virtually impossible. Leadership responsibilities may have required considerable time but participants were also students of a postsecondary institution with appreciable demands of time in such a role as well. Therefore, creating a balance between leadership and other responsibilities became critical. Whether being a student, spending time with friends, or becoming involved with other organizations, a person could only remain effective by appreciating the balance required. Other interests and varied roles provided opportunities to re-energize and re-commit regularly to leadership.

Leadership as Role and Learned Behaviour

While leadership provided occasions to improve skills useful once academic goals had been achieved, interesting perspectives were also presented about a leader as a person and as a member of an organization. Leadership could be viewed as a role that a person learned to play and implied a set of acquired techniques, personal skills enabling duties of leadership to be carried out and tasks performed in order to be effective. Earlier research (Porter, 1981) recognized the value of leadership training in preparation for assuming leadership responsibilities while similar studies (Grant, 1994; Barsi et al., 1985; Allen, 1990) described student leadership programs and techniques developed to create a supportive environment in which students could learn about leadership styles, gain confidence about themselves in leadership roles, and apply learning to future activities and responsibilities; techniques, procedures, and a model for an effective leadership training; and ways of teaching leadership to college students so it may be practised in a dynamic and constantly changing system.

Leadership may also be perceived as learned behaviour. A state of being may be

more important than technical expertise. A mind set was adopted by a person perceived as a leader in the eyes of colleagues. Leadership behaviour was learned and required a commitment to becoming the best leader and doing the most effective job possible. Role modelling became a critical component of learned leadership behaviour. Proper leadership conduct should be observed and would hopefully be emulated by peers. Wynne's (1984) study also supported leadership as a learned talent.

By modelling appropriate conduct, support was gained from individuals involved in activities who would eventually become leaders. An acceptable pattern of behaviour allowed more participants in the decision making process. Leadership became more than one individual taking charge and making decisions for an entire group. Other opinions were considered and more options were created for an organization. A pattern of shared leadership was formed based on mutual respect and trust. Involvement of colleagues strengthened leadership because responsibility was shared, accountability was distributed, and decisions were understood because of a collaborative process.

Behaviour during leadership activities as well as deportment away from formal responsibilities influenced the respect and trust gained from other members and outside observers. A leader also hoped to model behaviour that would become a trademark for future representatives of the organization. Perceived appropriate behaviour by a leader away from an organization became as important as the role and duties required as representative of a group. Proper role modelling behaviour meant doing the most work but also behaving in a manner above reproach, thus facilitating acceptance as a leader and being as effective as possible.

Student Leadership

Students were also very appreciative of opportunities to gain leadership experience, make mistakes, and learn from such errors. A college or university level environment created occasions to learn about leadership from several perspectives. A university milieu was perceived as an open-minded environment for students seeking opportunities to get involved in leadership activities. Considered free and open in the pursuit of knowledge, a university community also allowed students to improve as

individuals and as leaders. A student community was both accessible and forgiving for students prepared to express themselves through leadership. Traditions provided some direction and set certain limitations of behaviour for participants. If a leader was committed to an organization and its membership, students were prepared to give an individual every opportunity at leadership. Many earlier studies (Schoening & Keane, 1989; Mouritsen & Quick, 1987; Roberts & Ullom, 1989; Seitz & Pepitone, 1996; McIntire, 1989; Buckner & Williams, 1995; Yamasaki, 1995; Arminio, 1993; Grant, 1994; Fisher & Sartorelli, 1992) had recognized the value and importance of developing strong and comprehensive student leadership programs for college and university students. Engaging in leadership development opportunities was deemed most appropriate for postsecondary institutions.

Leadership and People

When leadership was examined in its totality, many benefits were highlighted. Personal development, observing and learning from other leaders, knowledge gained from a leader's own experiences, interactions with co-workers and information from such interactions, and skill development had taken place. However leadership became an opportunity to meet and learn from people as well as influencing individuals. Leadership was about people leading and others willing to follow. Individuals with an interest brought certain skills and abilities to a leadership situation. A proper attitude and ambition to lead was matched with other individuals looking for support, direction, and guidance in personal quests for improvement. Leadership was viewed as an ability to duplicate the desire of one individual with wishes of several people.

Relationships and friendships developed along the way. Individuals learned from peers, became friends, and enhanced the lives of colleagues. Leadership was about teaching without the appearance of being taught, created opportunities to learn away from formal situations, promoted growth in individuals, and allowed other persons to grow. Leadership was about learning, teaching, and growing. However, leadership was first and foremost about people, interactions among people, and the product of such encounters.

Beyond skills acquired, students also acknowledged various expectations

surrounding leadership involvement including demands on time, physical stress involved, pressures on relationships and academics, and the hard work associated with any leadership position. Students recognized that leadership was a role which must be taken seriously but that leadership behaviour was also learned. Students were also very grateful for the experience of leadership and particularly interpersonal relationships which emerged.

Research Question No. 5

What is the major influence of student leaders on the university community?

Student Representation

Findings from the study supported earlier research (Morison, 1970; Lawson, 1981; frederick, 1965) on the role of student governments in providing able representation, promoting leadership opportunities, and attaining the overall aims of education. Students leaders may be forced to make choices to ensure that all voices were heard and issues addressed. Concerns of student groups must be safeguarded while preserving the integrity of the role. Equal versus equitable representation was considered as well as an opportunity to demonstrate competencies as student representatives. Collective good and positive effects on various student groups was often at the heart of work performed by student leaders. To benefit a student community, regardless of the size of a specific group, was an accomplishment and perceived as a victory for all students. Results compared favourably with earlier research (Sessa, 1990; Newton, 1976; Leatt, 1988; Silien et al., 1992; Clerc & Debbasch, 1972; Alexander, 1969; Covington, 1986; Chambers & Phelps, 1993; Rice et al., 1971; Nussbaum et al., 1990; Taylor, 1973; Rost & Costgrove, 1987) on the importance of student government on campus, the role of student activism of student activism, and the need for greater participation by students in governance activities.

While student leaders had concerns for providing good representation to specific groups and ensuring problems were addressed, a general responsibility also existed as members of an overall committee. In the case of fraternities and student leaders representing residences on campus, addressing needs of specific communities became

important. Representing less visible groups effectively was to ensure that issues, discussed at the community level, were brought to the attention of student leadership within larger organizations. To dismiss or ignore problems was to trivialize the merits of smaller organizations and the role played by its representatives within a boarder student community.

Concerns of individual students may also be important and student leaders had an obligation to look at all issues and try to achieve resolution. However, student leadership had a broader mandate and problems of a larger student community, graduate or undergraduate, often outweighed concerns brought forward by specific individuals. Student leaders addressed individual issues but rarely at the expense of broad based concerns likely to affect more students and with long term implications. A student representative must be in tune with every resource to assist in making a judgment regardless of whether sources involved have a stake in the issue. Whether a concern is specific or general, an obligation remained of all student leaders to be representatives, to discuss when debate was required, to listen when issues were presented by other colleagues, to provide input when solicited or even when not requested, and to assist in all manner possible in the decision making process.

Sensitizing the University Community

Students also felt an obligation to raise issues and sensitize university administrators to students' needs now, issues most important to immediate success, and influences on student life in future years. Student leaders identified concerns for an on-going awareness of the university community, particularly segments of the administrative body of a college or university with few dealings with students and oftentimes impervious to particular concerns. Student leaders, through efforts on committees, ensured that university officials thought and looked at the effects of decisions on students now and in the future. Real sensitization was often never realized and thoughts of tokenism remained as students dealt with various concerns and issues. Identifying problems and sensitizing the university community became a clear responsibility of all student leadership but also a specific concern of each constituent group. Unless a university community was receptive,

prepared to listen, and willing to make changes, student organizations were unlikely to have any real effect on an overall university community and struggled to gain credibility with peers.

For student leaders, being a watchdog had both positive and negative connotations and might be perceived differently by students as well as university officials. Viewed positively, a watchdog role enabled student leaders to identify for university representatives concerns sensitive to students that have the possibility of short and long term ramifications. A watchdog role might be viewed negatively and with skepticism. University officials often retained an antiquated "in loco parentis" attitude regarding students. Listening would be initially too time consuming and might be perceived as accepting the possibility that students had a worthwhile contribution to make to an institution's affairs and acknowledging that another segment of the university community might have a role to play. Accepting that students can play a part and make a contribution to university life forced administrators to change old practices and behaviours in response to present and emerging student needs.

Credibility was both a personal endeavour and a challenge for the entire student community as student leaders in new positions struggled for acceptance each year. Credibility enabled student leaders to move around administrative and political circles of an institution and retain the respect of university officials as spokespersons for all or a segment of the student community. Student leaders could also circulate around the student community and have the respect of peers as an individual having the "ear" of university officials. Individuals and student groups struggled to gain credibility and play an effective role in the student community.

Learning About Student Leadership

Student leaders had to be informed of a myriad of issues and personalities assisting or obstructing the performance of leadership duties. A constant turn-over might be seen as an impairment to effectiveness however, student leaders and administrators often agreed that new faces could be a blessing if personalities had limited effectiveness of certain committees or prevented student issues from being addressed adequately.

Certain student groups developed a history of looking after students' interests and providing representation on several university committees. A commitment to civility was also expected of student leaders so the reputation of an organization was not tarnished and the history of quality representation was maintained. Student leaders also gained a degree of confidence and took responsibilities seriously.

Student leadership and its influence on campus might be a reflection of an historical role but also involved individual personalities. Such influence was not unlike the leadership proposed in earlier research (Selznick, 1984; Owens, 1998) on organizations and the relationship of its leadership to behavioural norms of an institution. Perspectives beyond students must also be considered and situations should be examined with a broader lense. Many students, administrators, and even student leaders viewed such an approach as smart political manoeuvring. Fighting only specific battles enabled broader, sensitive student issues to be won in the future.

For many student leaders, promoting strong relationships appeared to be at the heart of able representation of students. Establishing positive connections was not an immediate result of one or two encounters. Several meetings would be required before a level of trust could be established allowing student leaders and administrators to sit down and debate an issue, raise concerns, and arrive at solutions amenable to all parties. Establishing positive relationships required more than collaboration of specific individuals. Beyond one individual working with administrators, a collective effort was required and all student leaders within an organization needed to have a common understanding of relations requiring civility and respect. Student representatives understood that to be effective, to be a worthy and successful within an organization and beyond, all communications with university and government officials should maintain a level of respect for all parties involved. Personal and professional reputations of student leaders and student organizations were at stake. Frustration might set in as university representatives were unable or unwilling to recognize problems however, no benefit would be achieved by treating individuals with contempt.

Good voter response also cultivated an attitude of involvement and support for

student representatives. Bringing students "on-side" on an issue might sometimes be viewed with a degree of skepticism. A positive relationship between student representatives and university officials could be abused by both parties and possibly lead to a lack of cooperation and mistrust. On the one hand, student representatives carried the support and weight of a student community in all dealings with university officials. High voter turn-out was a measuring stick of legitimacy and student leaders were in a position of strength when discussing issues. A larger student organization would have greater credibility and a greater degree of influence. When used properly and discreetly, results tended to be very positive. Student leaders raised issues on behalf of the student community, concerns were addressed, and political representation served its purpose in the administrative structure of a postsecondary institution.

Student representatives were also ideally positioned to gain information and share details with university officials so programs and services could be designed to meet requirements of the student community. On-going contact of student representatives with the remainder of the student community also allowed for immediate changes and enabled an institution to respond quickly to emerging needs. Student leaders were uniquely situated to make long term contributions to the future of an institution through institutional policy development. By gaining insights into long term requirements for a student community, institutional officials would not simply be responding to immediate concerns. Support from students was established and could prove to be politically beneficial for all members.

However, university administrators might use student support in a negative fashion, camouflaging representation on committees as an opportunity to covet endorsements for plans, programs, and services, and garner favours with the remaining student community. Administrators could use the veil of student representation as tokenism without really seeking student input. While understanding that students' presence on committees may be seen as politically astute, university officials could use the semblance of representation to cover real intent.

Many student representatives regarded the essence of student leadership as

speaking on behalf of students' causes, but also to deflect potential student problems and issues. Other student leaders in the study saw such a relationship with university officials as demeaning and somewhat paternalistic. Student input may only be needed in times of crisis and used to quell potential student difficulties. Real student representation could be viewed as a farce using student presence only when trouble loomed in the future. Such a role was not one of representative but as a "lackey," someone uniquely positioned to deal with emerging student problems. Once an issue had been addressed, after student leaders were able to assist university administrators in dealing with an on-going crisis, students were no longer required and will only be called upon if another difficulty surfaced.

Managing a student and administrator relationship was not a short term process but required time. Student leaders mentioned the present relationship, perceived as good, had been cultivated over years. Both parties established open lines of communication and gained respect and trust. Student leaders and administrators managed the relationship and established a foundation so both parties could work together and achieve respective successes. Reference was also made to managing conflict so the relationship was maintained and both groups could work together. Managing conflict entailed accepting that disagreements would occur, student leaders might not see eye-to-eye with administrators' proposals, or university officials would not always agree with demands of the student community. However, both groups accepted that, for the sake of the entire university community and to maintain good relations, conflict between groups would be kept to a minimum. Both parties remained respectful of each role within the university community and needs of each group in order to remain effective. Both parties learned to appreciate the other group's role and understand the contribution that each party to the university community.

A positive perspective on the role of student leadership and its relationship with university officials also reflected marketing realities of the times. Any postsecondary institution expecting to attract quality students should be prepared to respond to students' needs and make changes to its relationship with student representatives. Officials could not afford to make changes to a university experience without first drawing on insights,

experiences, and expectations of its primary customer. Both in-class and out-of-class experiences must be shaped to reflect changes in societal demands of a postsecondary education as well as students' evolving needs. More options must be made available as students were now making choices of a postsecondary experience providing more than an traditional university or college education but making an institutional environment responsive to students needs.

University administrators usually underscore the role of student leadership and importance attached to such activities. Whether actions have been deliberate and meant to downplay the significance of the role and potential influence of student leaders, officials have failed to appreciate the developmental potential and marketing possibilities of leadership. As more and more students seek to improve career marketability, activities outside the formal classroom environment are being sought, helping to gain an edge over competition and assisting in the quest to obtain employment after university. Leadership possibilities and marketing interests could have an influence in students' choices of a potential postsecondary experience. Findings supported earlier research (Whitt, 1994; Wyatt & Stoner, 1984; Bradley & Brown, 1989; Ryan, 1994) on the involvement of students in leadership activities including residences, fraternities and administrators' weak attempts at greater student involvement.

Students accepted their roles as student representatives but also acknowledged other influences including their responsibility to sensitize the university community. As student leaders, being aware and informed of various campus issues was important and a reflection of the expectations students and the university community as a whole. Although many student leaders did not see themselves as very influential, the reaction was likely a reflection of the overall involvement of each student organization in university activities.

Summary

This chapter discussed the principle findings of the study with respect to the five research questions. Major influences to student leadership included the community, sports and school activities, several influential people at home as well as at university,

and positive and negative aspects of past leadership experiences. Meeting behaviour including various roles taken by individuals as well as the influence of role models were also addressed. Main benefits of leadership included skill development, leadership development, and gains in maturity. Significant learning associated with leadership identified skill acquisition, time management, significant demands, leadership within organizations, leadership as a role or learned behaviour, and the importance of modelling and relationships to leadership. Finally, influences of student leadership on campus focussed on political representation, sensitizing the university community, playing a watchdog role, managing the relationship between student leaders and university officials, and outlining the marketing potential of student leadership and the role the institution could play in encouraging greater student involvement.

CHAPTER 9

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides an overview of the study along with relevant results. Significant findings from each of the five specific research question are presented. Conclusions are drawn from the research followed by a series of recommendations. Personal reflections on various facets of the study are also provided.

Overview of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the behaviour of university student leaders in specific leadership positions. The general research question focussed on the perceived relationship between characteristics and experiences of university student leaders and behaviour in formal, specific leadership positions.

Twenty-one student leaders representing five different student groups were involved in the study. Seven females and 14 males took part in the research. Student groups included: the Students' Union, an organization representing all undergraduate students at the University of Alberta; the Graduate Students' Association, representing graduate students on campus; the Housing and Residents' Committee with members from all six residences on campus; the Panhellenic Council representing women's fraternities on campus; and the Interfraternity Council made up of members from men's fraternities. All five groups involved in the study were executive committees meaning its members held executive offices in each respective students organizations. However the Housing and Residents' Committee was a sub-committee of the Students' Union.

All participants took part in three facets of the research. Personal interviews lasted between 45 and 75 minutes, were scheduled at the convenience of participants, and involved a series of set questions. In addition, participants were asked to expand on various issues raised during personal interviews. Participants in the study and colleagues within each student group were also observed during one regularly scheduled meeting followed by a group interview. During group interviews, questions were developed as a result of observations of each group meeting and used to initiate discussion. Participants were also given an opportunity to expand on issues raised as a result of questions during

group interviews.

Summary of Findings

Major findings of the study are summarized in this section. Findings are presented based on each specific research question guiding the study. Major findings for each research question are presented followed by several minor findings.

Specific research question 1: "Which personal experiences are most influential on the leadership behaviour of students in formal leadership positions?"

1. The community was very influential in setting the stage for initial involvement in several community activities providing introductory experiences in leadership.

1.1 The school, its social network, and co-curricular activities provided a safe, secure environment for students to begin participation, provide confidence, and develop a necessary support structure.

1.2 Experimentation with a variety of activities was encouraged by students as well as initial efforts at leadership. Activities such as Girl Guides, Air Cadets, and the YMCA proved to be positive influences for students beginning participation in their home communities.

1.3 Organized sports continued to be strong environments for young people attempting to develop confidence and skills in preparation for other avenues of involvement.

1.4 Experiences gained while in a formal work setting also proved beneficial as students improved their leadership skills. The work place also provided opportunities to observe behaviour of colleagues and supervisors worthy of emulation as well as inappropriate behaviour.

2. Experiences gained at university became the next most influential environment for students having moved away from home and seeking a milieu to continue involvement.

2.1 Student residences, homes away from home for many students, provided a supportive environment for continued participation and later efforts in leadership.

2.2 Fraternities and their social networks became important for new students to make friends and maintained a supportive environment for participation and leadership.

2.3 Many out-of-class experiences and volunteer activities proved beneficial for students seeking to become involved, make friends, and sustain interests beyond academics.

3. Many individuals played key roles in getting students involved initially in their home communities.

3.1 Among community influences were parents, siblings, teachers, coaches, and former supervisors at work.

3.2 At university, key influences were colleagues within each student organization, university professors and administrators, friends, and significant others.

3.3 Parents continued to be strong influences despite the distance separating them from students.

3.4 Students identified both role models and mentors providing guidance, support, and influence.

4. Past experiences were beneficial in helping student leaders work with people, gain experience, and acquire self-confidence to continue involvement and leadership activities in the future.

5. Most experiences had both positive and negative aspects providing significant learning.

5.1 Among positive aspects associated with leadership were skill development which included: communication, organizational, delegation, and conflict resolution, freedom of task initiation and completion, helping others, obtaining appreciation from others, working as a team, developing contacts for the future, and social relationships.

5.2 Among negative facets of leadership were disciplining colleagues, time commitments, effects on academics and social relationships, and the lack of time to enjoy the experience of leadership.

Specific research question 2. "What leadership behaviour is demonstrated by students in formal leadership positions?"

1. A degree of formality and informality in leadership behaviour was demonstrated at every meeting to provide order, direction, and ensure meetings were productive and tasks

were accomplished.

1.1 Informality ensured a lighter mood was maintained, avoided boredom, and guarded against a degree of rigidity among members.

1.2 Meetings oscillated between formality and informality to shelter against rising tensions and to ensure meetings remained productive. Initial meetings of each committee were more formal but became informal as members became familiar with each other.

2. Consensus was the main decision making process as agreement was sought from all members in order to reach a decision or resolve an issue.

2.1 Input from all members was expected and valued.

2.2 Conflict arose periodically but was confined to issues rather than personalities.

3. Role modelling was recognized as a key component of any leadership behaviour.

4. Students identified and accepted various pressures associated with leadership.

5. Effectiveness was perceived differently by various students and combined both individual achievements as well as organizational successes.

6. Students learned both skills and failings associated with leadership.

6.1 Listening was recognized as a key skill among all leaders.

6.2 Trying to do too much, failure to delegate, and improper role modelling were perceived as weaknesses among leaders.

7. During meetings, various members played different informal roles based on situations and experiences. Roles included: motivator, facilitator, mediator, moderator, advisor, watchdog, worker, and schmoozer.

7.1 The president might have one or several formal or informal roles during meetings as the president and also as a member of the organization.

Specific research question 3. "Which major benefits do students gain from involvement in formal leadership activities?"

1. Students recognized both positive and negative outcomes associated with involvement in leadership activities.

1.1 Developing public speaking skills was regarded highly.

1.2 Gains in self confidence were evident as a result of leadership experiences.

1.3 Students developed good organizational skills as a result of leadership.

1.4 Students used leadership experiences to acquire and maintain personal and professional contacts for the future.

1.5 Students recognized the value of hard work in order to attain personal fulfilment and organizational objectives.

1.6 Interdependence with other members ensured more involvement and greater support.

1.7 Students knew the limits of abilities and what could be achieved.

1.8 Planning and visioning ensured personal objectives and organizational goals were met.

1.9 Leadership provided an avenue for professional growth and maturity.

1.10 Leadership opened both personal and professional possibilities.

1.11 Leadership allowed gains in self perception and trust.

1.12 A greater social network was created as a result of leadership.

2. Leadership and its activities could be physically and emotionally demanding on individuals.

2.1 A significant amount of stress was associated with leadership.

2.2 Leadership required a considerable time commitment.

2.3 Relationships could be affected by involvement in leadership.

2.4 Academic performance could be influenced by leadership activities.

2.5 Enjoyment of a leadership experience may be affected by its various demands.

2.6 A desire to lead in other situations may be a negative consequence of leadership.

2.7 A desire for additional power may also be a consequence of leadership.

2.8 Leadership experiences may lead to a lack of anonymity.

3. Students recognized the value of setting objectives, both personal and professional.

4. Much learning took place as a result of leadership.

Specific research question 4. "What significant learning take place from involvement in formal student leadership activities?"

1. Students recognized and appreciated learnings resulting from leadership.
    1.1 Communications skills were enhanced.
    1.2 For leadership to be effective, support from colleagues was necessary.
    1.3 Students remembered experiences associated with leadership.
    1.4 For leaders to be effective, a desire to work must be evident.
    1.5 Leadership must be demonstrated by actions as well as words.
    1.6 Leaders must be willing to make personal sacrifices.
    1.7 A balance must be struck between leadership and non-leadership activities.
    1.8 Leadership allowed for considerable self-fulfilment.
    1.9 Quality leadership was associated with benefiting colleagues.
    1.10 Leadership and learning were affected by time.
    1.11 Role modelling remained a major component of leadership.
    1.12 Positive relations were major products of leadership experiences.
2. Leadership was dynamic and affected less by its leader.
3. As new student leaders emerged yearly, the effects of leadership were not irreparable.

Specific research question 5. "What is the major influence of student leaders on the university community?"

1. Political representation was at the heart of student leadership in a university community.
    1.1 Student leaders were faced with representing divergent community interests.
    1.2 Student leaders ensured responsible representation.
    1.3 Proper representation implied working on various university committees.
    1.4 Representation denoted being sensitive to the entire university community.
    1.5 Political representation required the managing of relationships between student and university communities.
2. Student leaders often fulfilled a watchdog role at the university.
    2.1 Student leaders' influence might be specific to particular student groups.

2.2 Fraternities had only limited influence on a university community.

3. Student leaders were able to access university officials quite readily.

3.1 Relations with university officials were maintained.

3.2 Student leaders worked collaboratively with colleagues on campus.

4. Student leaders were often involved in trouble shooting activities.

5. Student leaders were often forced to defend actions of other students.

6. Student leadership allowed people to examine motives.

7. Student leadership had more clout than expected.

7.1. Many student leaders perceived their role as mere tokenism.

7.2. The influence of student leaders might only be significant on paper.

7.3. University officials had yet to recognize the true value of student leadership.

8. Marketing of leadership opportunities at university had yet to be done properly.

9. The credibility of student leadership must be safeguarded.

10. Quality students fostered quality leadership.

11. A culture of leadership had been developed and maintained.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Communities are very influential in providing initial opportunities for leadership experiences. Schools, communities leagues, and service agencies can collaborate to plan sports, recreational, and volunteer activities in an effort to promote community building and leadership development. Girl Guides, Air Cadets, and the YMCA are examples of youth activities fostering leadership.

2. Co-curricular opportunities on campus such as clubs and organizations continue involvement, acquaint students to the university community, and maximize the university experience.

3. Students use residences or fraternities to develop an initial social network on campus, begin involvement, and become introduced to the campus community.

4. Role models, mentors, teachers, parents, and siblings shape patterns of involvement and leadership behaviour.

5. Positive and negative aspects of leadership experiences become learning opportunities.

6. Leadership activities provide opportunities for skill development, team building, social development, and make valuable personal and professional contacts for the future.

7. Leadership activities are also time consuming and can have negative effects on relationships, and academics.

8. Past involvement and leadership experiences shape leadership behaviour.

9. Group meetings contain a degree of formality in order to achieve group objectives and a degree of informality to keep sessions enjoyable.

10. Consensus is a decision making method for student groups, is more time consuming, allows for all voices to be heard, and ensures a measure of agreement on issues.

11. Individuals assume various roles in order to move meetings forward and attend to tasks at hand.

12. A president chooses a formal role within a group or an informal role for the sake of group dynamics.

13. Role modelling is an important component of leadership.

14. A degree of pressure is associated with leadership.

15. Listening is a beneficial skill in all leadership situations.

16. Trying to do too much and poor role modelling are considered negative habits of leadership.

17. Benefits of leadership include public speaking, increased self confidence, organizational skills, personal and professional contacts, hard work, interdependence with colleagues, and knowing limits.

18. Personal and professional objectives are set through planning and visioning.

19. Leadership promotes professional growth and maturity, opens both personal and professional possibilities, allows for gains in self perception and trust, and creates a valuable social network for students.

20. Leadership activities are both physically and emotionally demanding.

21. Leadership is most effective when: support of colleagues is garnered, a desire to work is evident, actions are demonstrated as well as words, personal sacrifices are involved, a balance between leadership and non-leadership activities is achieved, and colleagues are benefited.

22. Effects of leadership are not irreparable. Leadership progresses regardless of its leader.

23. Political representation is the primary responsibility of student leadership within a university community.

24. Student leaders represent divergent community interests, ensure responsible representation, work on various university committees, are sensitive to an entire university community, and manage the relationship between student and university communities.

25. Student leaders fulfil a watchdog role in a university community, are involved in trouble shooting on campus, and are sometimes forced to defend actions of other students.

26. University officials fail to recognize the true value of student leadership.

27. Marketing leadership opportunities must be promoted by university officials.

28. A culture of leadership maintains credibility of student leaders and their influence on campus.

29. Many student leaders perceive their role as mere tokenism and only significant on paper.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations for future research and practice are put forward in the following sections:

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of the study expanded on the conceptual framework presented in Chapter 2 (Figure 2.1). Figure 9.1 broadened the initial conceptual framework to include influential components of community, university, as well as key individuals in the lives of

student leaders. Positive and negative aspects of past experiences were also used to influence present leadership. Meeting behaviour, roles of members, and the role of the president were augmented as well as the importance of role modelling to leadership. Benefits and learning associated with leadership were listed as was the influence of student leadership on campus. All factors combined determine leadership behaviour among student leaders.

Additional research should be undertaken in the following areas:

1. Leadership differences between male and female student leaders. Although the present study included both male and female participants, the research was not geared to identify gender differences, similarities, and their influences on leadership.

2. Leadership differences between graduate students and undergraduate students. The present study provided differences in maturity among older and younger student leaders however, additional research may reveal interesting findings that highlight discrepancies between undergraduate and graduate leadership.

3. Leadership differences between large student associations and smaller student clubs. Results of the current study revealed different perceptions of representation between student leaders of the Students' Union, Graduate Students' Association, fraternities, and the Housing and Residents' Committee. However, research focussing on large associations and small clubs may expand distinctions and identify similarities between groups.

4. Leadership differences between student leaders involved in residential and non-residential settings. Residential experiences proved very positive for student leaders in establishing a social network, introducing involvement, and leadership opportunities. Other differences as well as possible similarities may be revealed.

5. Case reports of student groups examined over one academic year. Such research would allow a lengthier and more in-depth examination of particular groups and enable the influence of leaders, other members, and their consequence on group effectiveness to emerge.

6. Case reports of student leaders examined over one academic year. Prolonged

research of one individual, in various leadership and non-leadership settings, could reveal interesting characteristics and factors beyond specific influences to leadership.

7. Student leaders over a four year university career. Longitudinal research may provide insights into the maturation process of student leaders and leadership.

8. Student leaders' leadership activities following completion of university careers. Such research would focus on the benefits of student leadership to personal and professional aspirations and successes.

9. High school seniors with an interest in student leadership through to first involvement and leadership experiences at university. Findings would provide a link between high school leadership and influences to future leadership activities.

Recommendations for Practice

Recommendations for practice are based on the findings and include:

1. Communities should ensure their schools provide several co-curricular opportunities for students. Community leagues and service agencies should sponsor programs such as Girl Guides, Air Cadets, and YMCA as opportunities for involvement and leadership development.

2. Through orientation programs, students at university should be introduced to out-of-class opportunities offered by various student clubs, campus recreation and athletics, and fraternal organizations.

3. New students at university should take advantage of community living opportunities provided by university and fraternity residences.

4. With the help of teachers, professors, and community leaders, student mentoring programs should be introduced in high school and university.

5. Mentors should hold debriefing sessions regularly in order to identify positive and negative aspects of involvement and leadership situations.

6. Mentor debriefing sessions should identify personal and professional skill development taking place as part of various leadership activities.

7. Time management workshops should be provided for all prospective leaders.

8. Formal records of all past involvement and leadership activities should be kept

for all students in high school and university in order to identify and match experiences with leadership strengths.

9. Student leaders should be introduced to leadership development programs offered in high school and university. Sessions on meeting planning and organization should be included with a need to mix formal and informal aspects of meetings.

10. Leadership development programs should familiarize student leaders with the art of consensus reaching.

11. Leadership development programs should acquaint student leaders with various roles taken by a leader as well as group members.

12. Leadership development programs should introduce student leaders with various roles taken by the president of student organizations.

13. Leadership development programs should focus on role modelling as part of leadership and behavioural expectations of student leaders. Pressures of student leadership should also discussed.

14. Leadership development programs should provide sessions in public speaking, planning and organization, collaborative work development, and identifying strengths and limitations of colleagues.

15. Leadership development programs should introduce sessions on visioning and goal setting.

16. Leadership development programs should provide sessions on networking, gaining and sharing trust, and personal growth and development.

17. Leadership development programs should include sessions on personal wellness.

18. Leadership development programs should introduce sessions on collaboration and team building.

19. Leadership development programs should include sessions on maintaining a positive attitude.

20. Leadership development programs should familiarize students with the role of political representative.

21. Leadership development programs should include sessions on equal and equitable representation.

22. Leadership development programs should have sessions on fulfilling watchdog and trouble shooting roles on campus.

23. Student leaders and university officials should work jointly to promote and market leadership roles and the benefits of leadership as part of a university experience.

24. Leadership development programs should hold sessions on the history of student leadership at university and benefits to both student and university communities.

25. Leadership development programs should highlight and safeguard the influence of student leaders on campus.

Expanded Conceptual Framework and Discussion

The conceptual framework (Figure 9.1) provides an expanded view of the relationship of past experiences and campus influence on leadership behaviour. The original conceptual framework (Figure 2.1) presented a more linear relationship of past experiences and campus influences affecting leadership behaviour. Previous experiences including leadership activities contributed to student leaders' conduct in leadership situations. Various influences on campus are also acknowledged as augmenting deportment of student leaders. Learning and benefits gained were attributed to these leadership experiences but the relationship to past experiences and campus influences was unclear. However the expanded conceptual framework provided below (Figure 9.1) details the relationship of past experiences as well as campus influences to leadership behaviour. In addition, these past experiences as well as campus influences also provided benefits and significant learning which affected leadership behaviour. An interrelationship appears to exist among these four components and each makes a contribution to students conduct themselves in leadership situations. Thus student leaders use benefits gained from past experiences and influences on campus to acquire skills, knowledge, and other advantages which will affect leadership behaviour.

Past experiences including involvement in previous leadership activities contributed to students' view of leadership and ability to deal with various situations. Of

note were influences within the home community including sports and various youth programs such as the YMCA and Air Cadets. Such programs provided an initial social environment for young people, contributed to gains in self confidence as well as skill development, and provided encouragement for continued participation.

Schools and the influence of key personnel and programs within the school system were also highlighted. In addition to being a recognized milieu for academic training and socialization, the school environment was identified for encouraging students to become involved in a myriad of social and recreational activities as well as participation in leadership through school government. In many instances, schools' leadership activities initiated students to appropriate behaviour and provided a supportive, learning environment for young people to experiment with leadership, learn initial demands as well as experience early successes as leaders.

Along the way, individuals played a key role in influencing student participation. Initially, parents and siblings provided necessary encouragement to students in order to experiment and experience various activities. A supportive family offered the necessary support to become involved and "test the waters" in community and school activities. Later on, teachers became influential and were acknowledged as instrumental in students participating in many school activities in order to highlight particular talents or skills. In addition to offering timely encouragement to students during elementary or secondary school years, teachers remained powerful forces in students' lives after the K through 12 experience and even through university. Coaches and even former supervisors at work were also considered important and provided much encouragement and support.

During early years at university, the residential environment was acknowledged as a key influence to students who needed a place to "fit in" and become involved. Whether university residences or men's and women's fraternities, such residential settings not only established key social networks for students, but created a warm supportive environment encouraging participation in various social, recreational, and philanthropic activities, and also enabled students to experiment with leadership at many levels. In addition, students took advantage of various student clubs and organizations on campus to participate in

interesting activities and used such groups to experiment in several leadership roles. For students who chose to increase leadership responsibilities, involvement in student government provided a diversified environment. Student representation was identified as a primary activity to expand involvement on various student and university committees. A key responsibility of student leaders was providing a student perspective in many situations, allowing university administrators to see different issues from a "student's eye" and reflecting on the potential impact of decisions on students.

In addition to the role as student representative, student leaders were also expected to play the role of "watchdog" on behalf of the student community. Student leaders would safeguard students' interests and rights across campus. As well, student leaders were often faced with defending students' behaviour, a role not especially relished. While many student leaders expressed the view that student input was valued and that student leadership played a vital role on campus, other student leaders perceived their influence as minimal to the point of being viewed as mere tokenism. Varied perceptions can be attributed to the size of the organizations that students represented. Representatives from fraternities and the Housing and Residents's Committee saw their influence as limited while the Graduate Students' Association and the Students' Union recognized their influence as more extensive. Major decisions affecting students' lives and the quality of the university experience had been decided by university administrators and student representatives were often expected to "rubber stamp"such decisions.

Student leaders, particularly those involved in student government became very acquainted and well versed in the political process on campus. While student advocacy was perceived as being of prime importance, student leaders also understood the relationship cultivated with university officials and were not about to damage their association for the sake of making a few "political points" with the student community. A connection had been established which would not be compromised for the sake of some immediate success and would be safeguarded for the sake of future student leaders. In many ways, student leaders knew that much could be achieved for the student community by retaining open lines of communication with university officials rather than

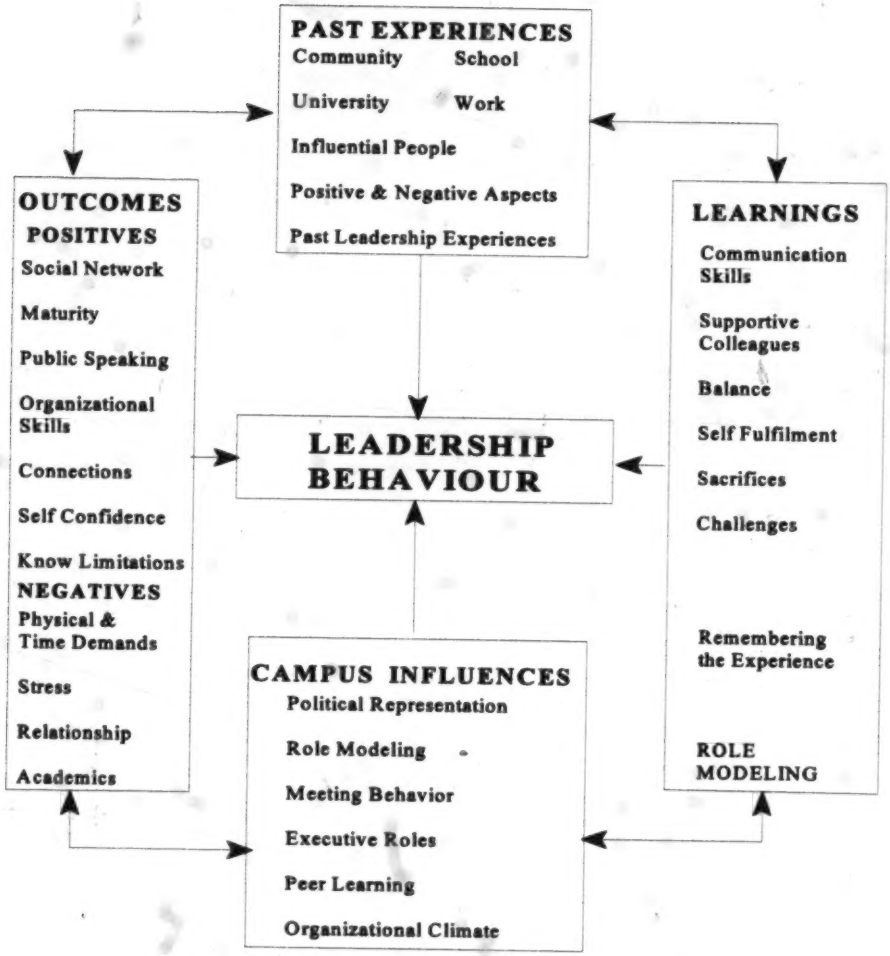

Figure 9.1: Expanded Conceptual Framework from Study

by taking an adversarial approach.

Student leaders also identified various roles required on student committees, how such responsibilities became learning opportunities and allowed for student groups to grow and attain objectives. Some students played the role of facilitator at committee meetings and enabled groups to move on to necessary tasks at hand. A role of motivator was sometimes required to offer encouragement at key times. Still other student leaders played the role of mediator when conflict arose. Talents as schmoozers were recognized as certain student leaders maintained positive relationships with other student and university groups while other student leaders were acknowledged for the role of "doer" or worker on a committee and ensuring the tasks of a student group would be accomplished. All roles became necessary and accepted as part of leadership behaviour. Although the president of a group might be expected to occupy a prominent role within the group or committee structure, it was often seen as appropriate for the recognized head of a group to assume a different role and allow colleagues the necessary freedom to find their niche within the group.

One role or responsibility which seemed to override all others and was recognized as critical to leadership was role modelling. Student leaders had appreciated appropriate modelling behaviour in past experiences while observing teachers, coaches, supervisors, and acknowledged its importance to leadership. Leaders, regardless of age and amount of responsibility, were expected to behave as leaders and demonstrate appropriate deportment. However, expectations of leadership behaviour went beyond leadership situations but was recognized as important in informal settings as well.

For this reason, role models and mentors were important in shaping student leaders' past experiences as well as present involvement in leadership. Teachers were mentioned as early role models as were parents, sports figures, and even political figures. Some mentors included teachers, university professors, and even colleagues within student groups on campus. Such individuals demonstrated the proper behaviour but had also been available to provide guidance and support at appropriate times. Such friendship and advice had proved invaluable as student leaders were "learning the ropes" and getting

acquainted with demands and responsibilities of leadership.

From such past experiences, influential activities on campus, and key individuals came significant learning which also shaped leadership behaviour. Communication skills were recognized as being essential to efficient leadership but had also been enhanced through participation in various leadership activities. Students also identified the need for supportive colleagues in making the leadership experience more enjoyable but also allowing leadership to be more effective. Balance was viewed as important and necessary if a leader was to enjoy success. Throwing everything into leadership at the expense of friends, family, social activities, and academics might be perceived as noble but not healthy. Leaders should maintain a balance of activities so necessary responsibilities could be tackled with commitment and enthusiasm. Although leadership involved making personal sacrifices in order to make the experience meaningful, many personal and professional challenges were posed. Student leaders had also learned that much fulfilment came from leadership involvement as did personal assessment of abilities and limitations. Leadership could be very gratifying as well as providing much learning.

Both positive and negative outcomes were perceived by student leaders. On the positive side, leadership had allowed student leaders to make valuable connections which could prove beneficial in future years. In addition, student leaders had gained a measure of self confidence attributed directly to various duties and responsibilities. As well, students recognized skill acquisition as an immediate positive effect on leadership but would also become valuable after university. Organizational skills were highlighted as having been acquired within the present leadership context but seen as being an asset later. From such leadership experiences, student leaders were able to identify strengths helpful in leadership settings but also recognized limitations of abilities and when delegating to colleagues was advised.

Physical and time demands were identified as negative aspects of taking part in leadership activities. A toll was exacted on the body and student leaders had to recognize appropriate times and take necessary remedial actions. Leadership was also perceived as a stressful activity due in part to its many demands. Students identified with time

requirements associated with leadership and how a commitment of time was necessary to achieve group objectives. Leadership had also been perceived as demanding on both relationships as well as academics forcing student leaders to juggle available time to make room for all demands.

Although leadership was never identified as easy, student leaders enjoyed the experience particularly the individuals who they encountered as a result of leadership. Aside from the acquisition of skills, student leaders acknowledged much pleasure in relationships cultivated from participation in leadership activities. Regardless of demands placed on body and soul, leadership would always be remembered for its social interactions and the people involved.

Personal Reflections

When I first decided to pursue a doctoral degree in 1994, I was convinced the research I would undertake would be in the area of student leadership. I was unsure at the time what the focus would be and how I would conduct the research. However, I knew that student leaders would be the group that I would wish to study and I was hopeful that among student leaders would be individuals living and working in residences. This was an environment I was very familiar with and a group of student leaders I had enjoyed working with for the past nine years.

I was fascinated to find that most of the research in leadership was focussed on administrators in schools or at senior levels of the postsecondary system. There was hardly a mention of leadership among student populations either in schools, colleges, or universities. Such a lack of interest in student leadership became painfully evident when I began course work and focussed many of my assignments on student leadership, only to find very little information available. Although initially surprised and disappointed, I then realized this dearth in research might be a blessing in disguise, be my opportunity to explore an area of leadership that had been ignored, and add to a body of knowledge. When I saw an opportunity of making my dissertation research and my interest in student leadership one in the same, I looked forward to the opportunity and began to give some thought to a manageable study, one done within a reasonable amount of time, one

including a varied selection of student leaders, and making a contribution to research.

I was surprised at the dearth of information in the area of student leadership. Studies were few, and although students and student leaders had been a popular group to examine in the late '60s and early '70s, there had been few studies following the turmoil on university and college campuses and even less research in Canada. Studies undertaken since that time had focussed on student governance and the relationship between student leaders and university officials. One area not studied was the relationship between past experiences, influences, and leadership behaviour. I became interested in examining what types of experiences had contributed to student leaders becoming involved in leadership activities at the University of Alberta. I was not only interested in recent experiences while at university but wanted to examine influential activities and people contributing to initial participation in home communities as well as leadership involvement.

I had some understanding of the work of student leaders and the amount of time that student leaders were devoting to residences. I was somewhat unfamiliar with student leaders from other walks of life, leaders involved with other student organizations and other aspects of campus life. Such a study would give me was a much broader perspective of student leadership and different types of student leadership activities around campus. Beyond residences were campus-wide student groups representing undergraduate and graduate student communities. As well, many smaller organizations looked after interests of specific segments of the student community. Finally, committees were devoted to working on behalf of segments of the student population such as students living in residences. All groups had worthy constituencies to oversee and were actively involved in protecting the interests of specific student populations.

Student leaders in residence had been a population that I was quite comfortable working with, and I was certain many would enjoy taking part in a study. Colleagues at work were surprised when I told them that I would also be working with leaders from other student organizations on campus. I could have easily found enough participants from six residence communities and gone through the process of personal interviews,

observations, and group interviews. Results would have been interesting as well and I suspect that I might enjoy doing such a study in future. However, I was concerned they would feel an obligation to become involved in the research because of my professional relationship. I was also worried that student leaders, strictly from various residences, might not give an adequate representation of student leadership on campus and I might gain valuable information from involving student leaders from other student organizations.

I was pleased that I ventured into unknown student leadership territory by interviewing student leaders from other groups on campus. I chose student leaders from five groups for different perspectives they would provide and the depth it might add to the research. I had always been fascinated by the Students' Union and the fraternities because of a somewhat adversarial relationship existing between student leaders in residence and these other groups. Although I had some minor dealings with both organizations, I could never understand why words SU and frats were mentioned in residence with scorn, derision and in some cases outright contempt. Both groups also represented large segments of the student community with the Students' Union being spokesperson for all undergraduate students on campus. Student leaders from the Students' Union were perceived as very self serving and only interested in padding resumes before heading out into the work force. I had heard that the SU was very political and its executive was only interested in making "points" on campus. I had also heard that many on their Executive saw the SU as another step up the political ladder. Student leaders in residence had several run ins with members of the SU and had very negative impressions of its executive committee. Members were seen as making themselves visible to the students in residence only prior to SU elections in March but remained far away from residences and residence issues for the rest of the year. Only its subcommittee, the Housing and Residents' Committee with its strong residence focus was seen as an ally to students in residence. Some students suspected that HARC had been formed so none of the executive members of the Students' Union would have to deal with residence issues. I approached these interviews with some trepidation.

The Graduate Students' Association also had a reputation of being uncooperative and to a certain degree ineffective as student representatives. I was intrigued with this group for several reasons. One, it also represented a large segment of the student community, one older, more mature, with more varied experiences in student leadership to share. Two, I was also a member of this student organization and was curious about my elected representatives. Finally, former colleagues also had negative impressions about their executive members and I was interested in getting to know these individuals better and perhaps finding out the source of possible frustrations. As well, as a member of a campus-wide alcohol committee, I had a few encounters with their representatives. Many times delegates were absent and thus it became difficult to typecast the leadership being provided to this constituent group. A former colleague had found certain members of its executive impertinent and difficult to work with. Regulations and procedures appeared to have little importance and its representatives were quite prepared to disregard regulations for no reason other than their perception that such restrictions were unfair and unworthy of graduate students' attention.

The only committee of which I had some familiarity and direct dealings was the Housing and Residents' Committee (HARC). As a staff member in residence and having been involved in leadership activities, I usually became acquainted with the presidents of each of the six residence associations. Presidents were usually representative members on HARC.

Both fraternity groups I would be dealing with were completely new to me. Although some students in residence did belong to various fraternities on campus, most had very negative impressions of the whole fraternity system. Negative publicity which had hounded fraternities for years still followed them and students in residence had little time or interest in fraternity members, much less interested in helping them recruit members from residence. A few times fraternities made requests to come into residence for that purpose however, they had been turned down by the residence associations. Characteristics and features of fraternities which made them unique and attractive to a portion of the student population were perceived negatively.

A fifth group, the Panhellenic Council, had been added to ensure a larger percentage of female participants. At the outset, I had not given much consideration to gender differences among student leaders. I expected student leaders would respond as student leaders without consideration for gender. I fully expected to have some female student leaders and their responses would be included in the study. However, a suggestion was made that I include a number of female student leaders. Although agreeing initially, I was concerned that my sample might no longer be representative as I would have to discard certain student leaders if they were male in favour of a greater number of female participants. I didn't disagree with the idea but was concerned that I would now be selecting my participants as opposed to interviewing volunteers. Fortunately, I discovered that the Interfraternity Council represented only men's fraternities on campus. Female fraternities were overseen by the Panhellenic Council. Although fewer in numbers, Panhell still represented approximately 150 female fraternity members and was a very active organization. As an umbrella organization for five or six women's fraternities, they met regularly, were involved in many social and philanthropic activities on campus, and also collaborated with the Interfraternity Council on a variety of common activities and events. Volunteer participants were solicited from Panhell and, as with the four other groups, were pleased to be involved in the study. The final numbers were 14 males and seven females.

There was no magic number of participants for the study. I could have chosen a smaller number and done a case study approach. I could have interviewed a smaller number or even focussed on one student from each group. I thought four per student organization would give me a reasonable number of participants for the purpose of the study. Initially the number would have been 16, which then turned into 20 with the addition of the four members from the Panhellenic Council, which finally to 21 when the addition of a fifth member of the SU executive.

At first, I was a little concerned with the number of participants and the method used to gather information. Interviews were time consuming and unless there was a strict approach when asking questions with very little flexibility, interviews could produce a lot

of information, data which would then need to be used in order to make findings relevant. Twenty-one participants would mean at least 21 hours of tapes, 21 hours of transcripts, and many more hours trying to break down the information into meaningful themes and making sense of the data. However, once I had agreed to 21 student leaders, I knew I had to be committed to the work involved.

Fortunately, 21 student leaders did produce considerable information that was very interesting and useful data. Participants were very accommodating and volunteered information freely. Most spoke at length as I posed various questions and many provided additional details. However, for the most part, students did not drone on incessantly and kept focussed on questions being asked. Some student leaders did elaborate freely but the information proved useful. As I was examining student leaders from five different groups, I was able to gain varying perspectives on leadership based on different experiences prior to university as well as leadership activities while at university. While I understood the analysis phase would be lengthy, I was very pleased with the amount of information I was collecting and varied experiences that student leaders provided. I knew that however long the analysis phase might be, I also knew that it would be interesting.

Age was never a consideration for student leaders. I was aware that by including representatives from the Graduate Students' Association, I would also be getting older, more mature student leaders. I was aware that the majority of student leaders involved in the study would be in their early twenties. Most participants had been a student for no more than two or three years and perhaps one or two years as a student leader. However, I was not looking for any relationship between age and student leadership and thus did not inquire about age or the number of years involved in leadership. Such a study would be for the future.

Several points impressed about all 21 student leaders who took part in the study. First they were all genuinely interested in their roles as student leaders. Several had attained positions of leadership because they aspired to such positions and had occupied minor positions of leadership either within the same organizations, other groups on campus, or groups within their home communities. Some student leaders had been

selected by parent organizations to be a representative on the committee. They had been assigned to be the spokesperson for a segment of the student population. Still others had attained these positions by chance. They had attended a meeting on behalf of their parent organization and just happened to be the right person at the right time and became the representative on an executive committee. However, once they had been elected or selected to represent their parent organization or a constituent group, they were prepared to do the work required in order to be effective and be the best representative possible. They were not about to disgrace their own name, the position, or the organization they represented.

Student leaders in the study appeared to be bright, intelligent students. We did not go looking at Grade Point Averages and I am unsure if a study has ever been done to establish a relationship between academic performance and leadership ability. However, all students interviewed appeared to be successful academically. Whether academic performance transferred directly into leadership ability is unsure but I would surprised if it did not. Some students mentioned that their academic performance had declined as a result of leadership involvement. Such a comment might reflect high standards that students had set and any decline regardless of how slight might be perceived as a disappointment.

All student leaders interviewed appeared to have been very active now as well as prior to coming to university. Such individuals did not appear to be the type to go to school, go home, and just "veg." These students appeared to have been very active prior to coming to university and continued their involvement as students. I had the impression that participation was a natural part of their lives and to do anything else would have been unacceptable. They seemed to think that involvement was as expected of themselves as it was of anyone else. Most participated in several activities and although leadership involvement appeared to be an important part of their lives, it was not the only part. They appeared to participate in many other activities.

All students exuded confidence. They all seemed to be very sure of themselves and confident in their ability as students and as leaders. They did not appear to be

overwhelmed by leadership but had a quiet assurance that they were quite capable of handling its many responsibilities. With such confidence came an outspokenness enabling them to speak their minds on the topic at hand. They did not appear hesitant to express their views on questions which I posed and answered them with self assurance. They may not have understood all questions the first time, but were not afraid to get clarification and not hesitant to retract something if they thought their response was not in line with the question. Whether such confidence is a result of leadership or that leadership draws people with confidence, it was apparent in the way they conducted themselves during interviews and the manner in which they approached every question with a degree of self assurance.

All students were extremely helpful and cooperative. While I tried to provide several possible times in which to meet, many went out of their way to accommodate me and allow me the necessary flexibility to do as many interviews within the shortest time span possible. I was not forced to drag the interviews over several months. In addition, once I began attending group meetings and wanting to meet with each group at the conclusion of each meeting, many committee chairs rescheduled their agenda items so I would have sufficient time to conduct interviews thoroughly and complete my research. There was no indication that I had disrupted the "affairs of state" by attending one of their meetings and following up with an interview. For the sake of committee members who had not taken part in personal interviews, members involved took the time to explain to their colleagues the purpose of my research and ensured complete cooperation. For some, group interviews would have lengthened regular committee meetings considerably and committee chairs purposely shortened meetings in order to allow me sufficient time to conduct my research. Even in cases when meetings were not shortened, members remained very attentive and became quite involved in the process.

All interviews, personal and group, were taped recorded and tapes then given to a transcriber. It might have been useful to do the transcriptions myself however, I was working part time and was concerned that I would not be able to do transcriptions and data analysis in a timely fashion. I did however record my thoughts following each

interview and reflected on each session and information collected. I also made notes during observations and transcribed these as well. Keeping a journal of all interviews and observation sessions proved to be very beneficial as I was able to reflect on each session and make necessary changes for an upcoming meeting with a student leader or a group.

I began to physically cut out responses to each question and pasting them on pieces of bristle board. Although this task proved to be time consuming, I became aware later during the analysis phase and the reporting of findings how valuable an exercise this had been. Not only did it allow me to paste all responses to one question on one piece of bristle board but it also enabled me to quickly identify similar responses to a same question and categorize themes emerging from the findings. Another minor point with such a process was the pasting of responses in the order in which they were returned from the transcriber as well as maintaining that order with all responses. I was able to quickly identify student leaders' responses to a similar question, various groups, and sequencing of responses. I was unaware at the time how valuable such an exercise would be later on.

Once all responses had been pasted, I then reviewed each and every response and identified common references and statements made by participants. Responses were highlighted and I kept the colour sequence in order to maintain consistency of responses. Again this was an activity which took some time but I found the effort very valuable in identifying common responses and making notes for reporting. Once all 21 interviews had been colour coded, I reviewed responses a second time to ensure I had not missed any points. I did a similar colour coding with responses from group interviews. Although that part of the exercise was no more difficult, I did not physically cut and paste but did keep the order of responses identical with all five groups. In hindsight, this was an error as discovered later in the reporting phase. It became more difficult to identify common themes throughout and that part of the analysis became longer than necessary. Nonetheless, I was still able to do colour coding of responses and use that when reporting the data. All five group sessions were reviewed to ensure that no information had been missed.

Finally, I had made notes of observation sessions and transcribed them myself.

Again although I did not physically cut and paste similar responses as I had done with personal interviews, I was still able to identify common occurrences which I pursued during group interviews. Information reported during observation sessions was not colour coded but common themes did emerge and were reported along with the other information.

After all responses from personal and group interviews as well as observation sessions had been colour coded, I identified common themes which would become part of the Findings chapters. Themes became fairly evident early in the process as many responses were similar in content although words used might have been different. Such an exercise proved to be most enjoyable as I now appreciated the efforts made earlier in colour coding responses thus facilitating the emergence of similar thematic content for the purposes of reporting. I was also pleased that, beyond a set of common questions posed to each participant interviewed as well as similar questions developed from observing five meetings, student leaders were able to expand on responses in a similar fashion. This facilitated the development of themes which later became sub headings in the Findings chapters. Despite student leaders from various walks of life, having lived in various parts of the country and in the case of one student, a different part of the world, there had been many common experiences which precipitated initial involvement in their communities as well as subsequent involvement in leadership. Reporting of such findings was easy and made the research important for myself as well as anyone else who might be interested in student leadership. It also allowed writing of such findings in a meaningful fashion and drawing worthwhile conclusions from the study.

I am very pleased and satisfied to have undertaken such a study. Since my arrival at the University of Alberta, I had been fascinated with the involvement of student leaders in residence and impressed with the amount of work that student leaders do, often with little or no recognition from peers or the rest of the university community. As a full-time staff member in residence, I witnessed first hand the work of student leaders and was quite appreciative of their efforts. Unfortunately, I was only one of too few as most of my colleagues who came to work at 8:30 am and left at 4:30 pm were never privy to the

efforts of student leaders did as well as the quality of their initiatives. They saw such individuals as simply students in residence, involved to a greater degree than the average student, but never fully aware of the extent of the involvement. I consider myself fortunate to have witnessed their work and commitment.

However, despite all the effort and unbounded dedication, I had remained intrigued by individuals choosing to become student leaders and doing all the extra work. A vast majority of students only attended classes, came home, took part in various social activities, and led normal lives of 18, 19, and 20 year old students in residence. What was so special about this group of students and what made them become involved and remained involved in leadership?

I was also not prepared for the varied roles that student organizations occupy on campus. A most obvious one was political representation as such a responsibility had been a traditional one. Student leaders were very aware of political duties and in most cases carried out such roles very effectively. However, they also assumed several other duties making their contribution to university life that much more important. Student leaders were watchdogs on behalf of the student community and were always concerned with making certain that university officials do what was best for the student population. They were also defenders of students rights on campus. They ensured students had the best academic programs, quality facilities, and required services. Student leaders were also motivators of the student population on campus. Through varied social and cultural activities, they ensured a strong and vibrant student community.

I was also not aware of the varied backgrounds of student leaders. Student leaders came to leadership with a wide range of experiences, diverse and yet rich allowing them to make significant contributions to leadership and to student life. Student leaders were influenced by various factors prompting involvement in a myriad of activities during their formative years. Yet these varied activities had commonalities enabling students to steer their interests into leadership activities and later on at university.

Finally, I was not prepared for the skill development which takes place. Obviously, I was aware that students acquired some skills as a result of being involved in

leadership activities. However, I was not aware nor did I think students were conscious of the degree of skill development as a result of leadership. I found students were very cognisant of the abilities acquired from various leadership experiences. Such skills not only provided the basis for quality leadership while at university but could become significant assets when students completed their university education and pursued professional careers.

Student leaders make a significant contribution to the university community. Beyond varied roles occupied and many functions fulfilled on behalf of students, they are vitally important to the overall health of the campus. University administrators should never take the contribution of student leaders for granted. While student representation is oftentimes a *fait accompli* for many institutions and university officials may think they can count on student leaders to take their rightful place in the university community, we owe the student community and its student leaders to ensure the experience of leadership is both positive and developmental. A university education goes beyond the classroom and we must ensure that student leadership remains a quality experience for students and its leaders retain an important role within the university community. Beyond our formal roles as academics, administrators, or university officials, we must never forget our common role as educators.

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APPENDIX A

Personal Interview Questions

Let's discuss your past experiences and how they have influenced your present leadership involvement.

Describe experiences which encouraged you to become involved in leadership?
Which experience was most influential in getting you involved in your present leadership activity?
Why was this experience so influential?
Describe previous leadership activities prior to and including university?
Which previous leadership activity was most influential in getting you involved in your present leadership activity?
Why was this leadership activity so influential?
Describe a positive leadership experience you have had? Why was the experience positive?
Describe a negative leadership experience you have had? Why was the experience negative?

Let us now turn to your present leadership responsibilities.

Describe positive aspects about your present leadership?
Describe negative aspects about your present leadership?
Describe the role you play in your group.
Describe skills that a leader should have.
What are things that a leader should not do.
Describe a typical meeting of your group.
Describe your function within the group.
Describe the role of your group at this institution?
Describe the role of student leadership at this institution?
How much is your behaviour in this group guided by past experiences, present

experience, or other factors?

What are similarities between your present leadership position and past positions?

What are differences between your present leadership position and past positions?

What have been positive effects of your leadership involvement?

What have been negative effects of your leadership involvement?

To what extent has leadership been a positive experience?

To what extent has leadership been a negative experience?

Describe what you have learned from your leadership involvement?

What would you tell someone who is about to be elected or selected to a student leadership position?

Being a student leader has meant....

APPENDIX B

Group Interview Questions

1. Talk about the formality yet the informality of your meeting?
2. Are decisions made by vote or consensus?
3. Talk about the evolution of the dynamics of your group.
4. How do you deal with divergent community interests?
5. How do you know if you're being effective?
6. What skills have you learned or refined as a result of being a member of this group?
7. Input from members. Does that occur on all issues? Is it important for everyone to have their say?
8. Talk about the pressure of leadership.
9. What frustrates you about being a student leader?
10. What will you remember about your leadership experience at university?

APPENDIX C

Letter to Chair or President of Student Groups Requesting Participation in the Study

October 2, 1996.

XXXXXXXXXX
Chair,
Interfraternities Council
Box 133 SUB
University of Alberta

Re: Dissertation Research

Dear XXXX:

I am unsure whether you have received this information before but one of my doctoral students, Michel Ouellette, is involved in a study of student leadership at the postsecondary level. You may already know Michel from his work in residence life and student leadership with the Department of Housing and Food Services.

The study seeks to examine characteristics, experiences, and behaviour of student leaders which influence leadership. The research is made up of four phases and requires the participation of four members of your Council taking part in one 90-minute personal interview and group interview session.

Phase 1 is a Pilot Study and involves one student leader from the group identified participating in a personal interview. The Pilot Study enables interview techniques to be refined and ensures questions are well understood by the participants.

Phase 2 is an observation session of one of your Council meetings during the September to December semester. Michel would sit and make notes on the behaviour of the four participants in the study as well as interactions of the entire group.

Phase 3 is a group interview session following your meeting. The group interview

session will be scheduled at the convenience of the participants, will last approximately 30 to 45 minutes, and will take place in late November.

The final phase is the formal personal interviews with the three remaining student leaders from your group. Each interview will be approximately 90 minutes in length and will be scheduled sometime during the semester at the convenience of the participants.

Personal and group interviews will be audio recorded while written notes will be taken during the observation session. All information will be kept confidential and will only be used for research purposes. Anonymity of the participants will be safeguarded at all times.

Let me assure you XXXX that this is not a study on the IFC or fraternities as a whole. It is a research project on student leadership and members of your group are just one of several student groups involved in the study.

I am hopeful your executive will participate in this study and you will identify the four participants and allow the observation of one meeting during the semester. If you require further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me (492-7606) or Michel (439-5269 (h) or 492-4281 (w)). I believe this is an important study and will contribute to our body of knowledge on student leadership. Please forward your response to me or Michel he can begin interviews later this month. Thanks for your kind assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Michel Ouellette for
Michael Andrews,PhD
Associate Professor

APPENDIX D

Letter sent participants requesting they verify transcripts of their personal interviews

January 15, 1997.

Dear :

First of all, happy New Year! I trust the upcoming year and upcoming semester will be productive ones for you.

Please find enclosed the transcript of the taped interview we had last semester. I realize that it's been a few months since we had our interview but please review the contents. Feel free to make changes to your responses if those you read do not accurately reflect your sentiments to the questions posed. Return the transcript to me and I will make the appropriate changes before I begin the analysis. If you are satisfied with your responses, please keep the transcript or destroy it if you wish. If you choose not to return the transcript, I will assume you are satisfied with your interview and I will begin analysing its contents.

I would like to thank you for agreeing to the interview and sharing your thoughts on student leadership with me. Your contribution will allow us to add to the body of knowledge in the area. I also hope the interview allowed you to reflect on your own role as a student leader and the contribution you are making to the university community. As I may have mentioned to you, once the data has been analysed and reported, a copy of the dissertation will be sent to your student group.

Once again, many thanks for your time and involvement in this study on student leadership. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me (439-5269 (home); 492-4281 (office)).

Sincerely,

Michel Ouellette